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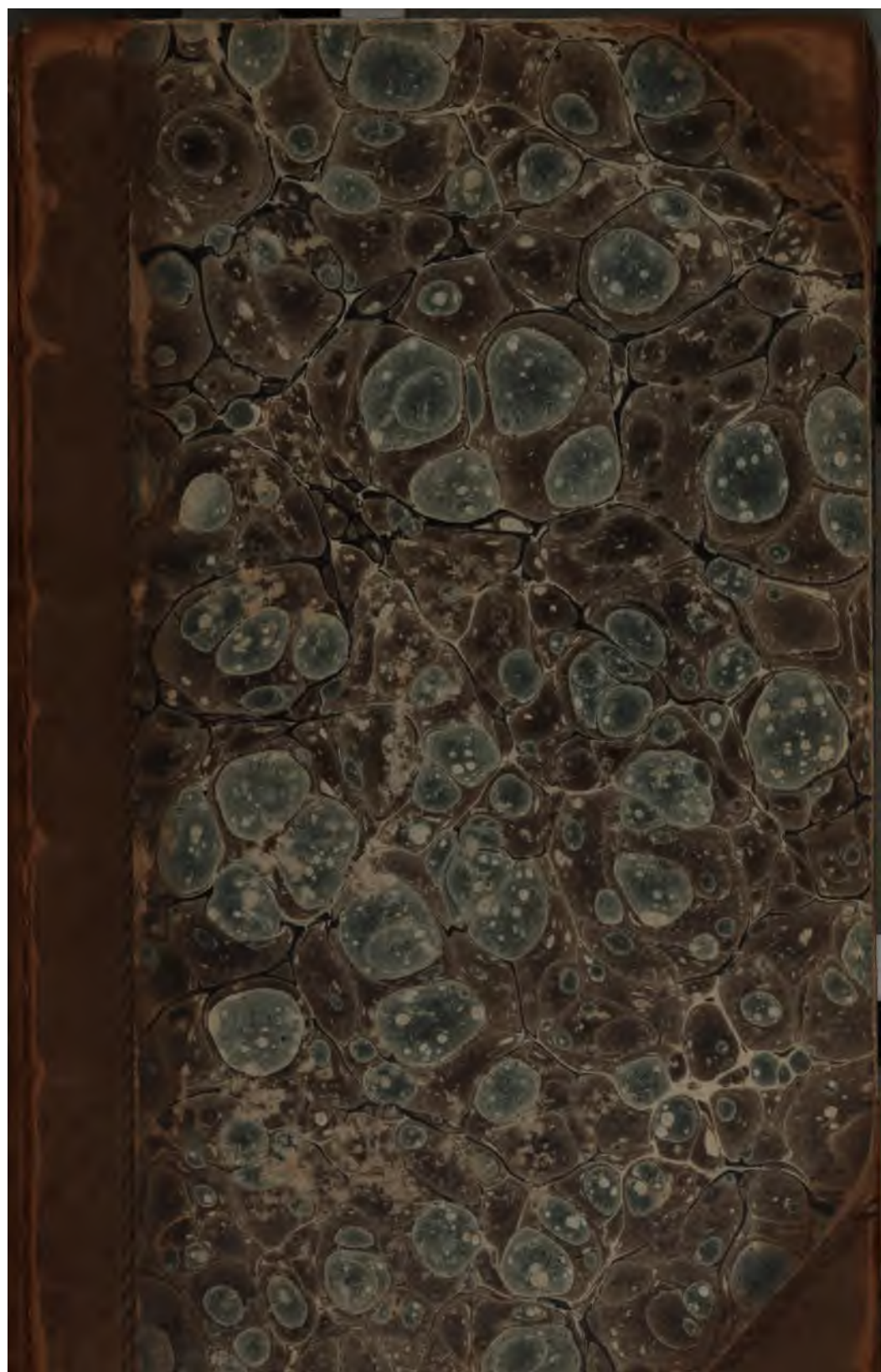
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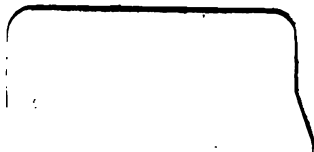




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761.





VALENCIA;

A TRAGEDY:

AND

WHO COULD BELIEVE IT?

A COMEDY.

VALENCIA:

5H-1830

A TRAGEDY,

In Five Acts;

AND

WHO COULD BELIEVE IT?

A COMEDY

In Five Acts.

BY



MRS. SAM^L. DUKINFIELD SWARBRECK.

Life is a weather glass, wherein old Time
Doth show his seasons — our transient days
Evaporate, as do the clouds in air:
Our smiles and tears, alternate beam and fall,
As do the sunny rays and show'rs from Heav'n.

THE AUTHOR.

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR, BY M. BELL,
RICHMOND, YORKSHIRE.

1830.

761.

THE HISTORY OF

THE

WARRIORS OF THE

WARRIORS

TO
HER ROYAL HIGHNESS
THE
DUCHESS OF KENT,
TO WHOM THE FOLLOWING WORKS ARE DEDICATED,
BY HER MOST GRACIOUS AND SPECIAL PERMISSION.

MADAM,

IMPRESSED with a deep sense of gratitude, I beg here, further to acknowledge the condescending and kind manner in which your Royal Highness honored me with your illustrious and inestimable Patronage : inestimable in a double sense, because, exalted virtues and exalted rank united, must throw a wreath of honor and protection around those who have the happiness to partake of your Royal Highness's kind favor : under which, humble as the following inexperienced efforts are, I feel proud in acknowledging myself their Author ;

And with the highest Gratitude and Respect,

Your Royal Highness's

Most Dutiful and Obedient Servant,

DELIA CAROLINE SWARBRECK.

BARNARD CASTLE, MAY 15, 1830.

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PREFACE.

THE very kind and flattering encouragement which the Author has met with in ushering these her first dramatic efforts into notice, demands from her the most sincere acknowledgments. To her Royal Highness the Princess Augusta, and to her Royal Highness the Duchess of Gloucester, she begs to offer an assurance of the dutiful and grateful feeling she entertains, for the gracious manner in which their Royal Highnesses bestowed upon her their august sanction: and, indeed, to all who have so kindly favored her, by honoring the foregoing pages with their names, she begs, individually, to return her best thanks.

To the recollection of Mr. Liston's comic powers the Author must attribute her first idea of atten

rama;

the character of Lamsley having presented itself to her imagination. She commenced the Comedy without any serious intention of completing it; but being amused by the novelty of the attempt, she finished it in little more than a week. Although she cannot plead this as an excuse for the many faults which so inexperienced an effort must contain, yet she trusts it may in some degree soften criticism.

The characters are not aimed at individuals. The part of Lady Dashington is intended to show how unamiable the adoption of folly and affectation is, particularly when assumed by those, who raised from obscurity to rank and fortune, are sometimes too apt to forget themselves, and by an overbearing behaviour to lose that respect and esteem, which by an opposite conduct they would merit and even command.

The plot of the Comedy has been thought like that of the Play of Riches, adapted by Sir James Bland Burges, Bart., from one of Massinger's Plays. The Author has never read Massinger's Plays; nor had she seen the Play of Riches before the remark was made. She has since, however, perused it, and so far as that part of the plot extends, which relates to the reformation of a wife from folly, through the pretended death of a husband, most certainly there is a great similitude: but the situations

and characters are so widely different, that, like two persons who bear a resemblance to each other, when the features are examined, the delusion ceases.

Having completed the Comedy, the Author next began a Tragedy, and wrote Valencia ; composing it rather as a poem than for representation on the stage. The opening of the first Scene, will, no doubt, appear a singular commencement for a Tragedy : being advised, however, to give it in its original shape, she prefers doing so ; else it would, perhaps, have been better omitted.

The several mistakes of the press throughout the volume, will, it is hoped, be kindly overlooked, the work having been printed in the country, under many disadvantages.

With these remarks the Author begs for the present to take her leave : and, as the same sun that warms the humble weed, gilds the richer beauties of the luxuriant flower, so may she hope to participate in a small portion of that favor, which bids more brilliant efforts flourish : intending shortly to produce some other works, which she is at present occupied in completing.

ERRATA.

P. 49. l. 9 from the bottom, for "fiend" read "friend."

P. 112. l. 11. for "boucoup" read "beaucoup."

P. 149. l. 16. for "recommends you" read "recommends to you."

The word "its" in the sense used in page 7. l. 11, is there, and in other places printed by mistake "it's."

VALENCIA.

A

Tragedy.

IN FIVE ACTS.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

LORENZO, *Duke di Montalto.*

MARQUIS *di Rimini.*

VALENCIA, *Son to Lorenzo.*

GONSALVO, *Count Antonio.*

BELTIMONT, }
CARLOS, } *Servants to Lorenzo.*

ANTION, *a Confederate of Gonsalvo's.*

SEBASTIAN, }
OSMOND, } *Confederates of Antion's.*

BERTHA, *Duchess di Montalto.*

FLORANTHE, *Daughter of the Marquis di Rimini.*

LEONORA, *a Nun.*

ABBESS, *and NUNS, &c.*

SCENE—*ITALY.*

VALENCIA.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *An Italian Village.*

Enter ANTION hastily, with a dog; BELTIMONT following.

BELT. THAT'S my dog, Sir.

ANT. You lie like a dog, it's mine.

BELT. I don't lie at all, I stand to my word.

ANT. Do you stand by your word, Sir?

BELT. By my word I do stand by my dog.

ANT. Then Sir, standing by your word, by your dog
You shall lie.

BELT. I'll stand by my word in my defence :
I shall lie by my dog if I don't.

ANT. What is your word, Sir?

BELT. Dog Sir.

ANT. Do you call me a dog, Sir?

BELT. No Sir, I call you a thief of a dog.

ANT. Then Sir I call you a very dog itself.

BELT. Then I'll make you eat your words.

ANT. My words to actions brought,
Shall make dog's meat for dogs.

BELT. 'Tis meet I hear not that again.

ANT Gainsay then what you have said.

BELT I do again say what I've said,
And double it.

ANT Your rapier draw Sir, draw I say.

BELT We've rapt enough ; we'll draw a contract
straight :

And on the blades of our good trusty weapons,
Leave our broils :
That hence, when 'casion calls them to the point,
They may bestrew their ready warmth elsewhere.
Why man we're friends.

ANT Why in good sooth, that were we sure enough ;
And why or wherefore should we not be now,
I neither know, nor wish, nor care to say again.

BELT But how comes this same rascal cur of mine,
To be thus trailing at another's heel ?
And give me to and fro, the dancing measure,
Of a lengthen'd search ? Out on thee flap-ear'd rogue.

[*Striking the dog.*]

ANT Nay, pr'ythee swinge him not ; a faithful dog
he is,

And only that he lov'd his master's friend,
He had not tended me a willing ear ;
But in gruff dudgeon, snarl'd his hoarse reproof,
To rid him of intrusion.

I saw him trotting with a prosy mien
Along his 'custom'd track, and ever and anon,
He bent his nose, to sniff his way along.
I said John ! and he wagg'd his tail ; and then
I said John ! come John ! and he wagg'd his legs
And came. What could I say but John, come John.
Why was he not thy dog ?

BELT. Ha! ha!

'Tis a good cur to speak the least of him :
But I was tir'd of pacing up and down.
He sav'd my master's life ; nor would I barter
For the price of gold, that self-same cur, nor e'en
His little tail, which he doth wag so merrily,
With honest welcome from a grateful heart.
Why there's a lesson, ay, a wond'rous lesson
To be learnt, of faithful 'durance from that little dog :
Would man but condescend to take a hint,
And 'midst his lofty thoughts,
Let one remembrance of a dumb thing's faith,
Teach him the truth of constancy.

ANT. What ! did he save thy master's life ?

BELT. Ay that did he, most sure.

ANT. Then thou might'st tell me that, tho' all else be
So secret in his fate, that no more than a frown
Wilt thou e'er give, in answer to my questions.

BELT. Well, well, I'll tell thee then :
For I do verily believe,
A furnace burns upon thine ear-gap, which
Willingly would draw within its curious flame,
All the world's secrets which it burns to know.

ANT. Nay, if thou thinkest that, I'd burn both ears off,
Ere I'd give an ear, for what thou hast to tell.
It is from pure good wishes that I'd listen.

BELT. Well be it so : a nutshell tho' would well
contain
The value of that credit, which I'd give thee
On the 'count of non-curiosity.
But I, or else I do belie my own true thoughts,
Am sure thou hast an honest heart.

ANT. Well now then, let me hear
How John did save thy master.

BELT. Ay, ay.
Thou'rt truly ready for the op'ning siege ;
Which will at all events, bestow on thee
The victory of knowing something more—
'Twas on a summer's eve ; when the great light of day,
Had sunk beyond night's drowsy sight :
Who riding slowly on her gloomy clouds,
Hail'd her mild virgin friend the moon ; whose pale
Yet lovely face reflected on her low'ring brow,
And brightly ting'd her cheek with silver o'er.
All the day's flittings of the wingy tribes had ceas'd :
And peace, with outstretch'd finger beckon'd sleep ;
And then with gentle pressure clos'd sweet nature's eye,
Which sleep sealed with her kiss—
All was so hush'd, that silence clos'd within mine ear
Her dizzy knell, which hums like chimes within the brain,
Dinging upon the sense.

Enter CARLOS in haste.

CARL. Fie on thee Beltimont I say ;
I've sought thee far and near.
Thou hast more need for galloping away,
Than standing here with gaping idle mouth,
Outfacing all the gossips of the town,
With thy unruly tongue. Thou hast
Become of late a very tittle tattle.
Would any body please to know, or this, or that,
'Tis but to say—Why Beltimont what now ?
And thou'lt augment the very essence of the news.

BELT. Thou'rt good, ay very good,
For taking off the cream of vanity :
For mine had ris'n to a pitch, upon the score
Of keeping mine own counts, and those of others too,
By hanging them upon a peg, 'back of my brain,
In the close cavity of prudence.
But tell me pray, what should I
Strip past my accustomed pace for ?
What has been brooding, to burst on me now ?

CARL. 'Tis that alas ! I'd willingly deny,
From certainty of it's not being what it is.
But my sad errand vexes me at heart,
Ay, grief pines at it sore : there's danger in my news.
Our master may not see another dawn ;
With trembling vapor in his sinking eye,
He's struggling now with death.

BELT. A stabber's penetrating steel, aim'd with
Treachery's sudden blow, had not struck me
With so keen a shock, as thy ill boding words.
But has not fear outridden danger far ?
Surely there must, Oh yes ! there shall be hope.

CARL. Nay, nay, most truly nay ; he has himself
With steady fearless speech, proclaim'd his end ;
And all our human fears and cares were vain,
To save a life, which joy'd all others round him.
And I am sent in search of thee,
That thou mayest seek our dear young master.

BELT. I willingly would fly but cannot ;
The wings of hope are clipp'd, and my numb'd faculties
Move on a leaden hinge.

CARL. But thou wer't far more kind, to stir thy best
resolves,

And shake off these selfish feelings.
Alas ! what grief, what heartfelt grief there'll be :
I dread to think on't.

BELT. Thou'st roused away the coward tremor,
Which had seized my very limbs :
I had forgotten all but mine own grief :
Come on.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *A Convent Garden.*

Enter FLORANTHE and LEONORA.

LEON. Now am I charm'd dear friend, to greet thee
once again :
For I did think thou wouldst forget these tranquil scenes ;
And 'mid the bustle of bright gaiety,
Ne'er cast a thought to visit us so soon.

FLOR. Ay, but you see,
These strange misgivings often prove untrue :
For I can tell thee, 'twas a thing so near my heart,
That I could think of nothing else.
'Twas much against my father's wishes that I came,
But my kind mother su'd with so much earnestness,
That he at length said yes.

LEON. I from my heart do thank him for that little
word,
Which though of trifling sound,
Doth so much good and evil in the world.
'Tis the spontaneous word which love delights to hear ;
He dwells upon the echo of it's sound, and—

FLOR. But wherefore, Leonora, speak of love ?

Surely fair saint,

Thou think'st not of this dang'rous urchin here.

LEON. Why, truly, I do think of him, but not for self;
It is for thee, Floranthe, that I think;
Now thou'rt surrounded by the glitt'ring world:
Beware, dear friend.

FLOR. Oh! kindly said, and still more kindly meant.
But, Leonora, when you think of the world,
Are you not sorry you became a nun?
Immur'd in the close covert of these dreary walls.
I should go mad, and batter out my brains,
'Gainst some huge corner of these cloister'd paths.
Come now, confess, and I'll absolve you straight.
I vow that I do see a twinkling, ever and anon,
Peer at the corner of that eye above the heart,
Which shoots up it's wishes perpendicularly,
Telling a tale you fain would hide.
'Tis an arch eye; that would bethink it better,
To gaze askance within the naughty world,
Than look straight forward in these shades.
'Tis not a cloister-loving eye: no, no;
It looks beyond the limits of these tow'ring walls,
And tells how it would lead it's mistress forth,
In life's lightest trip.
How could'st thou, with such beauty, rank, and wealth,
Become a nun?

LEON. What are the pageants of exterior show,
When the poor heart heaves with internal woe?
What, when the keenest shaft that pierces to the quick,
Has cut a lasting wound within its core?
Which time can never heal: How then?

FLOR. Ay, that indeed speaks out the blaze of this
world's goods.

But who can think that thou e'er felt a pang,
To crush the loving minstrelsy
That sings about the heart;
And teaches it in whisp'ring melody,
The labyrinths of love's wild harmony.
Thou hast ne'er tasted of its discord;
That I do know.

LEON. But I, alas, do know I have.

FLOR. Why surely then, I say, such placid brow as
thine,
But ill bears witness to a cankering wound,
Fed by the vital grief of love.
I will believe none on't;
Thou'rt an impostor, Leonora.

LEON. And yet, there must have been some serious
cause,
For giving up those vanities which cling to us,
In the bright zenith of the world's encamp:
In whose centre I was attir'd passing well;
With all it's outward trappings.
Think'st thou, without a reason
I could give up youth's gay allurements?

FLOR. Why truly no; I should not think thee so bare-
witted.
But thou dost look the very emblem of content
And peace; save that same twinkling, which, as I did say,
Peers at the corner of that eye.

LEON. Why grief was sick of me;
I drew so copiously upon her stream,

That my poor eyes once pour'd a constant shower.

FLOR. Then thou hast wept, sweet friend, until thine
eyes

Have been washed bright again,
With their perpetual dews ;
Which, like soft showers in spring,
That draw the blossoms forth,
And make them grow apace,
Have renovated thy poor eyes.
Why sure thy tears are miracles.
I would I had such tears within my eyes,
For mine do scald their very sockets,
And I can ne'er deny vile sorrow's batch;
For she doth mark these worthless orbits round
With her red hideous circle, which speaks nought.
But tears, ay blistering tears.
But I will bring a little sponge,
And if thou'lt have the charity
To drop a few of thy most precious tears upon't,
Why I do think their touch will do a wond'rous deed,
And teach mine better manners.

LEON. Ay, but they are with me, now, scarce commodities.

Devotion was my oculist ; she dry'd my tears,
And in their lieu, dropt her sweet balm of peace,
Which clear'd my sight, and gave it holy strength.

FLOR. Then recommend me humbly to her care, dear
friend,

For I would fain retrieve that liberty of sight,
Whose strength did once forbid such troubled show'rs.

[*Sighs.*

LEON. Wherefore that sigh, Floranthe ?

Surely thy summer prospects are not yet o'ercast?
Thou canst not have a cause for sighing yet?
'Tis but the day dawn of thy brightest hours.
But I would, by a tender word or two,
Fain guard thee by my fate.

FLOR. I have true cause for sighs, ay and for tears.
The gayest lights oft have a cloud cast o'er them.
Even the glorious sun himself,
Is with a sudden gloom enshrined,
And his vast empire of majestic light,
O'erpower'd by dense vapors in the air.

LEON. You fancy grief because you've never met her,
And dress her up in the false colors of your mind;
But let her rest, nor tempt such masquerade;
She'll come upon thee quick enough, and shew herself
Without the quaint ceremony of disguise.

FLOR. Alack! I would I knew her not so well,
In her broad faced reality.
She is, methinks, a hideous hag.
Ah me!

How hard it is to struggle by a show
Of mirth, when sorrow tugs upon the heart.

LEON. Indeed, Floranthe, all thy words of gaiety
But ill disguis'd the tremor felt within.
I saw thee chang'd, e'en e'er we parted last.
Often, thy hurried accents, and thy thoughtful eye,
Told me all was not right:
But, wherefore, I could never give a guess:
The more I thought, the more it wonder'd me.

FLOR. Then, friend, I'll tell thee that,
Which still will make thee wonder more:
Thine ear will scarcely let thy sense believe it.

I love ——

Yes, Leonora, and what think'st thou that I love ?

No visionary brightness, but an earthly form

Of such perfection, that when first my sight

Was dazzled, as I gazed, unconsciously

The image flew to my astonished heart ;

And fixed itself so firmly there,

That when I strove to tear it out again,

The pain was too intense ; I found the effort vain,

And left the poison in it to consume me—

By chance we met ——

Incautiously I'd stray'd to yonder beauteous lake :

There on it's peaceful bosom did I gaze ;

My own was then as calm ——

The vespers rose, their sweet and solemn melody

Swell'd on the stillness with a heavenly peal :

It did recall me from my contemplative mood ;

I had forgot the time.

Starting, I rais'd my eyes, and there beheld

A stranger most intently watching *me*.

My trembling limbs refus'd to take me on ;

A cry of terror issu'd from my lips.

But soon the stranger's voice drove fear away :

Yes, Leonora, that dear voice e'en then

Sunk on mine ear, his tender gaze, upon my heart—

Never to be forgot—

He dwells in thought, in sight, in sound ;

All my poor senses rest alone on him.

He is, what the great glorious sun is to the world,

My bright day's orb : and what the moon is to the night,

The lamp that cheers my solitary hours.—

He is my destiny.

LEON. Alas ! Floranthe, I can scarce believe thy tale,
So much am I indeed surpris'd.
Hast thou e'er seen him since ?

FLOR. Oh ! yes ; each day, as sure as the bright morning
Oped her gates in the resplendent east,
Did my day's luminary hover near,
To shine upon my sight,
And bless me with his balmy breath ;
Like morning's gentle breeze.
And, as the sun hung in his golden beams,
In glorious radiance sinking to his rest,
So my bright star, my soul's dear idol came,
To pour his ev'ning blessing in mine ear ;
Like the soft sighing of the ev'ning zephyr.
Until some evil spirit,
Jealous of it's power to cross the path of love,
Came to unset my peace.
I was compell'd to tend my father's pleasure ;
Torn from the spot that held my dearest hope,
To flutter like a wounded bird,
Within a splendid cage.
Oh ! Leonora, counsel me dear friend ;
And tend me with a kind and patient spirit.
My heart is ill at ease.—

LEON. Who is he dear Floranthe, whom thou lovest ?

FLOR. One, whom my father would strike to the earth,
For daring to look on me with the eye of love.

LEON. Alas ! I grieve to hear it.
Thou must forget him.

FLOR. Teach me to ride upon yon sailing cloud,
Where 'neath my feet, immeasurable space
Would stretch me from this earth ——

'Tis just as easy ——

Teach me to curve the rainbow's splendid arch,
And paint it's aerial brightness
Upon the vast expanse 'twixt heav'n and earth ;
Teach me this — for thou canst just as soon,
As bend my thoughts from their accustom'd orbit.

LEON. Let me not hear thee say that, which doth draw
Despair and ruin close upon thine heel.
Oh ! dear Floranthe, loose this fancied web,
Which the wild hand of chance hath wov'n round thee.
Strive to subdue this dang'rous coil within,
That would o'erturn thy duty and thy peace.
Dress up thy mind with firmness, to keep count
Of that, which doth lie due to nature.

'Tis an untoward chance,
Which you should poise with a nice scrutiny,
And see how it falls short of honest weight,
With the just claims which you've upon you.

FLOR. These have I overweighed,
Yet find them short of weight,
Being weighed with that great weight,
Which weighs upon my heart.

LEON. But to love that, which is not worth thy love,
Is loving love, for love's only foolish sake ;
Without a reason : 'tis a vain phrenzy.

FLOR. Nay deem me not so ransack'd of all good,
That I can love what is not worth the loving.
I tell thee, Leonora, the earth doth not
Contain more nobleness of nature :
And he is noble born.

LEON. But love distils the essence of our sight ;
Draws forth poor reason from her struggling seat ;

Tosses our judgment on his giddy stream,
And sends our senses floating, cap in hand.
But where, Floranthe, if he be indeed
That very greatness, which you think he is,
Where stands that wond'rous powerful risk,
Which you so fear would lose such merchandize?

FLOR. There lies the quibble, which doth so evade
The seeming: the riddle which doth sift in vain
A just conclusion. 'Tis not in our poor judgment
To decide, why nature so belies herself.
Her whys and wherefores she doth cunning keep,
Within her own wise scope; they'd not be good
Perhaps, for mortal knowledge, and therefore
Are most rightly kept unknown.

LEON. What is his name?

FLOR. Nought but dear heaven and my love,
Hath yet e'er heard me breathe out that sweet sound,
And when my tongue doth give it utterance,
It's echo here, doth beat a quick response.
In a soft whisper, lest the envious wind
Should snatch it rudely from my lips,
Let me straight pour it close into thine ear.
It is — Valencia.

LEON. Then do I grieve at heart, if you confirm my fears.
Is he that same Valencia,
Who is son to the recluse;
Who some two years ago came to the house
In yonder vale, not far from that same
Dangerous lake?

FLOR. He is —

LEON. Alas! Floranthe; wherefore couldst thou not
Check in it's rise, this dang'rous sense of love?

Whate'er Valencia is, a cloud of some
Mishap doth shroud him, and the stern finger
Of suspicion points at his father ;
Who shuns all human eyes, save those
Of the few trusty beings, who tend upon his wants,
None know from whence he came, or how.
That he is rich, is far beyond a doubt :
For charity there doth seem to hold her court ;
And plenty fills her hand with an unceasing store.

FLOR. And charity doth bless all whom she dwelleth with.
But come, dear friend, I must away ;
Time wears apace, 'tis past the mid of day.
Oh Leonora ! there is one ——
Who now with anxious eye, doth watch the sun.

[*Exeunt.*

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I. *Another part of the Convent Garden,*

VALENCIA discovered watching a Sun-dial.

VAL. The sun
Hath past the centre of his vast domain ;
And glides on westward in his airy course.
Nature doth shrink beneath his burning rays,
And her sweet blushing cheek is richly gilt
With his bright fire. Where is my love ?
My anxious eye hath watched the shade
Creep on the dial's face — 'tis past the time

She promis'd to be here. What hath delay'd her ?
Fear hangs upon the threshold of my thoughts,
And will ere long break down hope's barrier.
Hie on old Time, and wing thyself anew :
Speed with youth's progress thro' this yawning space ;
Lag not thy moments, father of the fates ;
But quickly shoot the coming interval,
That hides my watch'd for treasure from my sight.
Oh ! my Floranthe, why am I compell'd
To snatch at chance for thy bless'd presence ?
How doth this blighting wayward mystery,
That hangs upon my birth, envelope me !
What can it mean ? That I am nobly born,
My father hath oft told me, but—but what ?
Ay, there's the fatal query—
Which like a common stabber,
Doth steal behind to take a wary blow :
And rob me of——of what ? My honor's blood ?
Ay, may be so—how then ? Why then 'twere better
For the mist of death to shroud me from the world ;
And the firm grasp of earth to hold me from its scorn.

Enter FLORANTHE.

FLOR. Thy words do greet me like a chilling blast.
Death ! Oh Valencia ! wherefore speak of death ?

VAL. How could I utter the cold name of death,
With thee so near, who art my very life ?
The sainted object of my earthly pilgrimage ;
At whose dear shrine, my soul doth rest its hopes :
At whose bless'd sight, life show'rs her golden grain
Upon my thoughts :

Like a rich harvest blessing all the earth.
Doubt and alarm have fled with hasty strides,
Leaving my bosom filled with thy dear self.

FLOR. Doubt and alarm! Why sure thou canst not
deem

My love so light, that these twin monsters should
Intrude to snatch a thought from constancy,
Whose steady fire burns with an equal blaze,
And lights my soul to dwell alone on thee.

VAL. Oh! let me gaze upon thee, my earth's paradise—
Oh! my Floranthe! if I doubt, 'tis but that one
Unworthy of an angel, hath presum'd to love thee;
And for that vast presumption, I do fear
Some sad calamity.

Oh! could I proudly claim and call thee mine!
But myst'ry hath twin'd a strange misshapen wreath
To bind my love. Oh! my Floranthe!
I am — What am I — not that,
Which I would be for thy dear sake.

FLOR. Oh! thou art all
My fondest wishes could combine to make thee.
Thou couldst not in my eyes be more, wert thou
In regal sway, or did a nation's wealth
Own thee its master.

VAL. Beloved, dear saint!—
Thy mind is as a treasure found
Within a splendid case,
Whose exquisite exterior doth attract,
Almost to make the gem within unsought;
And yet, when the vast treasure is explor'd,
The dazzle of the jewel case is far outshone
By the more precious gem that's found within.

Oh ! I do look with a penurious eye ;
Lest some vile hand should thrust itself,
To rob me of my love ;
And leave me, like a wretched miser starv'd ;
To seek an early, unlamented grave.

FLOR. I wish that thou couldst hide me in thy heart,
And then thou'dst have thy fancied treasure safe :
'Tis the close bondage that I'd fain be in,
Because there'd not be room for any other ;
And though my dwelling would be small,
Yet I should be the queen of a rich empire ;
And crown'd with joy, to rule with love's dear sway.

BELT. (*behind*) Hist ! hist !

VAL. What sound is that ? Who's there ?

FLOR. I must in haste away. But hark !

BELT. Hist ! hist !

FLOR. Mercy ! who's that ?

Some evil spirit hath attentive ears ;
And thus doth haunt us with it's babbling sounds.

VAL. Then will I teach it with a vengeance,
That stealing on another's secret, is a crime
Which must be dealt with thus.

[*Draws.*

FLOR. Hold ! dear Valencia, hold ! put up thy sword.

VAL. Away, Floranthe, quick, away sweet love ;
I'll meet thee near the wicker gate at sunset.
Linger not thus, but swiftly haste away ;
You will confirm suspicions if you stay.

FLOR. With this dear promise, must I cheer my
thoughts,
And bear this sad unlook'd for banishment.

[*Exit.*

VAL. Now then intrusion's fool,
Who thus hath stol'n on my secret, and hath
So plunder'd me of my life's choicest moments ;
Come forth ! or I will start thee from thy covert,
With more urgency, than thou wouldst like
To answer with thy coward skin. Come forth ;
Or I will mark thee, like a target, with all hazard.

BELTIMONT comes forward.

BELT. Hist ! hist ! my lord, my lord.

VAL. Ha ! Beltimont ! why this intrusion ?
Wherefore, hast thou dared to seek me thus ?

BELT. Ah ! would I had a lighter cause to give,
Than that which hath so urg'd me to your sight.
I'd willingly endure whate'er could be inflicted,
Could I with certainty cast off the heavy
Burthen of my news, and change it's substance
Into safe assurances.

VAL. But what strange chance brought thee upon me
thus ?
'Thou must have known — Some rumour led thee hither.

BELT. My lord,
Your father bade me seek you near the convent.

VAL. Beltimont, 'tis false — my father knew not
Of my hovering near this place.

BELT. Nay, then my lord, he nam'd this very spot ;
And bade me try to outride death, and fetch you to him,
Ere he did arrive.

My lord, your noble father's dying.

VAL. My father dying ! Oh Beltimont !
Is this thy piercing news ? My father dying !

Dying didst thou say ?

Tell me I'm deaf, and that I heard not right :

Thou surely couldst not say my father's dying.

BELT. My lord, I would I could not, but he is.

VAL. E'en as a stricken autumn

Upon an early winter's verge ——

Then may the wings of peace fan him to rest,

And gently waft him where he'll be more blest.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *Near LORENZO'S House.*

Enter BELTIMONT and CARLOS.

CARL. I tell thee Beltimont, e'en in the midst of grief,

Which I am sure doth pinch me to the quick,

And leaves me small attention for aught else ;

Yet do I say again, altho' I'm griev'd,

Ay, to the very heart, I cannot help

But cast a thought upon that man, with whom

I have oft seen thee hold discourse of late.

I tell thee, Beltimont, that he's a rogue.

BELT. I tell thee, Carlos, that he's an honest man.

But wherefore should we stumble on his name,

To buffet to and fro, with idle words,

When we've so much of moment to deplore ?

CARL. Because a strange misgiving doth hang on me ;

Which I do struggle vainly to cast off.

BELT. Then wear thy strange misgiving quietly,

And for the present let it not intrude,

To worry thy poor brain and mine.

What is't to thee or me, an if he be a rogue ?

CARL. To thee, or me, perhaps it matters not ;
But I do fear for others, whom we both
Would shed our last good drop of blood for.
And now I'll make thee open both thine eyes.
I say I have my doubts of Signor Gonsalvo—
I verily believe he is not what he should be ;
With all that his smooth sugar'd tongue doth utter.

BELT. Thou art too surely in an ugly dream,
And must be rambling thro' it's influence.
'Thy reason sleepeth, but thy tongue hath pow'r,
To vent the ebullitions of thy wand'ring brain.

CARL. I say, Signor Gonsalvo is a villain.

BELT. Awake, good Carlos, these are dang'rous words.
The devil haunts thee with his sland'rous tongue,
And teacheth thee to utter what thou should'st not.

CARL. Then will I in my waking senses tell thee ;
The devil haunts me in a human form—
Gonsalvo is that devil ——

BELT. Nay, nay ; first thou didst call in question
That poor honest man I talked with,
When thou soughtest me ; and now thy
Varying fancy falls aboard Signor Gonsalvo.
Strange flights these for a man awake,
And in his senses too.

CARL. But Signor Gonsalvo, and that very man,
Are not so wide asunder as thou thinkest.

BELT. Now, this is more like madness e'en than
dreaming.
I will not listen to thy foolish words,
Which do not suit the present moment
Of our grief.

CARL. E'en now, since our young master did return ;

I saw Gonsalvo with that man, lurking
Within the orange grove—
In earnest converse did they seem
To knit their purposes ; for ever and anon,
With scowling brow, and threat'ning menace,
Did Gonsalvo dart a hasty glance, toward
The window of my dying master's chamber,
I strove to steal upon their conference ;
But ere, with wary pace, I reach'd the spot,
They separated. But I did hear one say,
Beware of Beltimont and Carlos—
I'll stake my life on this ;
And I am neither mad nor dreaming.

BELT. There is some mystery, if thou'rt in earnest,
But it can never be as thou dost fear :
Surely, Gonsalvo is no villain.

CARL. Well, well, I'll say no more ; for time will shew,
Which holds the mirror up of all things.
But we must be on th' alert : a strange suspicion,
Now I think on't, comes across me ; 'bout that night,
When thou didst save our master's life.

BELT. But thou canst never think
Gonsalvo had to do with that foul deed ?

CARL. I think a great deal more than I have said,
I hope all will be found more just than I do fear,
But time—time—An old man's wary eye
Doth look with a suspicious glance.
I fear all is not right with our dear master,

[*Exeunt,*

SCENE III. *A sick Chamber.*

*LORENZO discovered on a couch : VALENCIA and
GONSALVO standing near him.*

Gons. Words cannot tell thee the deep grief,
Which lies so heavy on my aching heart,
At this sad sight. Forgive my tears ;
I cannot keep them in. Our early friendship
Hath so bound me to thee ; that my very life
Doth seem to hang on thine.

Lor. Bethink thee better of this present grief, Gonsalvo,
And with calm reason 'suage it's wayward course.
I do beseech thee by thy steady friendship ;
Which hath e'er soothed my deepest griefs :
To cheer me now with thy supporting aid.
Oh my dear friend, restrain this burst of sorrow ;
And promise me that thou wilt be,
The friend, the steady, constant friend
To my dear son, that thou hast been to me.
Oh ! promise this, and I shall die in peace.

Gons. This doth my heart, of it's own promptness,
Yearn to promise thee most faithfully.
His interest is my own, and next to thee,—
Hath ever claim'd my best regards—
While I have breath, I never can forget—
Valencia is thy son—
As I have done to thee—so will I unto him :
Need I say more.—My grief lacks eloquence ;
But simple truth speaks most in simple words,
At such a time as this. You must forgive my tears.

LOR. I thank thee my dear friend—my sinking heart
Doth thank thee, and receives a temp'rary gleam
To lighten my last moments—
Valencia, I have much to say to thee, my son.
Gonsalvo hath by chance discover'd that thou lovest ;
Yes my dear son, one whom it is my proudest hope
That thou shouldst call thy wife. Thy birth and wealth
Do give thee pow'r, to claim her of her father.
Valencia, guard her next thy heart,
And be the shield of honor to her youth.
Regard her as that rare and beauteous gem,
Whose brilliancy attracts man's evil eye,
And fills him with the base designs of sin :
Yes, tempts him to transgress the bounds of honesty,
And makes him gaze with madness to possess,
That which should grace and lustre give,
In honorable safety, to another.—
Such as Floranthe is, thy beauteous mother was :
A gentle dove, with loveliest plumage deck'd ;
A being, whose bless'd presence, with an angel's smile,
Promis'd a lasting dwelling of sweet peace and love,
But in an evil hour, which blasted all my hopes ;
I was compell'd to leave her for a while.
E'en now, my drooping heart,
Which feels the fast approach of death,
Beats with a quicker throb, and my sick fancy
Traces back, the sad reality long past—
Some time elaps'd 'ere duty to my country
Did permit me to return ; meanwhile,
I left this our dear faithful friend, to watch
O'er my treasure's safety ; but he, unconscious
Of such guile himself, knew not suspicion's throbs ;

[Gonsalvo starts.

And slumber'd, unknowing who was aiming
To unset my crown of happiness ;
And rob it of the value it possess'd ;
Leaving a base and worthless guilty thing—
In lieu of my rich treasure.

Yes, start not, my Valencia ;
Thy mother, in my absence, did become—
That very thing—a base—dishonored—
Conscious-stricken shadow of her former self.

VAL. But you did live—and crushed
The vile destroyer of her honor.

[Gonsalvo turns away.]

LOR. No, my dear son ; I never could discover him.
A blighting mystery hung upon the facts :
Else had my hand dealt showers of blood,
To 'suage my honor's pangs.

VAL A. double thralldom fills my soul with horror.
Why have I liv'd to hear this blasting truth ?
But wherefore do I wander from my present grief ;
To catch from distance back a curse of fate ?
Oh duty ! duty ! check my wand'ring brain ;
And thou affection smooth my rugged thoughts,
And stem the rushing torrents of my soul.

[Aside]

Oh my dear father !
Poison not the present fatal hour,
With these reflections of thy life's dread curse.
Peace should hang o'er thy drooping brow,
And calm thy sorrows into future hopes.
Oh my lov'd father ! lean thy weary head
Upon this arm ; which would defend and save thee—
From every pang—e'en from the shaft of death.

That I might see thee still for many years;
And thou behold in me—if earth contain the fiend—
The just avenger of a father's wrongs—

[*Gonsalvo starts.*]

But oh! forgive this thought—
It was a dream, that I would fain forget—
Stand awhile but quietly thou beating heart;
And let the glim'rings of a parent's fading eye
Flit from this earthly life in peace.
It ill becomes a dying man,
To bear the burden of this world's revenge,
And wield it's sceptre in the face of death.
Be still, be still, untoward thought;
And centre all thy throes in this sad moment.

[*Aside.*]

Lor. All is at peace, dear son, within my breast;
And calm forgiveness to all other's sins,
Sooth's me to hope forgiveness of my own.
In secret from the world, have I e'er since
Shunn'd all society; watching the progress
Of thy coming years.
Thy birth I've screen'd from thee; but when my breath
Shall cease, then shall our friend Gonsalvo
Make known thy right to high distinction:
And reinstate thee in thy proper rank.
Valencia, I do charge thee, hold him in thine
Heart: and look up to him when I am gone,
As if thou bore him the great debt of life;
Ay, e'en as if he was thy parent: for he did
Sooth my sorrows, and was my constant friend,
Thro' that calamity which press'd my earlier days;
Whose influence hath e'er since blighted my life.

VAL. Oh my sad fated mother !—
Then she did bite repentance to the bone—
Lives she yet in exile ?
Has then the worm that fed upon her heart,
Left for repentant guilt a crevice,
To build a humble shed ? in whose small nook
A ray of peace might shine, to light her weary way
Through this world's pilgrimage ; and lead her
To seek forgiveness, by years of calm repentance,
And firm prayer.
Does my unhappy mother live ?

LOR. No, no—
She sunk a sad and powerless victim
At my feet, bathed them with tears,
And clung about me with her tender arms ;
Screamed in wild accents for forgiveness,
'Ere she in phrensy took her last adieu,
But with these hands, these murderous hands,
I tore away her grasp, and spurned her—
Like a serpent, from my touch—
A dagger glar'd upon my sight—I—I—
Caught the bloody weapon, I clasped it—
Dripping with her life's stream. Ha ! ha ! ha ! ha !

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I. *A Room in LORENZO'S House.*

Enter VALENCIA, in deep mourning.

VAL. Great nature's pause hath stemm'd life's bubbling
stream—

The stern cold blow is struck—death's silent greeting—

Yes—life hath spun out its transitory web—

And my lov'd father's doom,

By the inevitable seal is fix'd.

Why am I left to mourn thee?

And why do bitter thoughts rebel? and thus

Outstrip the grief that gnaws upon my heart?

A name stained by disgrace and murder!

Wherefore should I seek to bear its heavy weight,

And brave the sneers of an ungen'rous world?

I'm innocent—but what of that? A name

Is for the honor of the world: the world

Doth make it what it is, and will unmake it

At it's whimsy pleasure; and so slur over

It's great seeming—

Gonsalvo doth warily evade all question;

And sometimes in prophetic silence shakes his head:

As tho' some yet unseen, and lurking mystery,

Hung brooding in his thoughts.

Enter BELTIMONT.

BELT. My lord; Signor Gonsalvo bade me give you this:
And tell you it contain'd some fatal relics,
Which do alone belong to you; and are
Most proper for your keeping —
And will remind you of a distant deed,
Which slumbers in the pass of many years.

VAL. Ha! 'tis strange; what means he by that message?

[Takes a small packet from Beltimont, and opens it. He finds a handkerchief stained with blood; and a dagger drops from it at his feet: at which he starts with horror.]

BELT. What is't my lord?

VAL. Blood — *[Thrusting the handkerchief hastily into his bosom, and placing his foot upon the dagger to hide it.]*

BELT. Blood?

VAL. Ay blood —

A stagnant pool — that creams upon my brain —
And trickles down in leaden drops upon my heart;
Curds at its source — and doth almost congeal
The spring of breath!

BELT. Blood!!

VAL. Ay, black — corroding — long shed blood —
A cank'rous test of guilt: — a double source,
Where horror draws her choaking breath,
And with a husky scream, dins blood —
Nothing but blood upon mine ear;
And my strain'd sense droops like a stricken thing,
Outbalanced by fate's poison.
Leave me good Beltimont —

BELT. Nay, nay, dear lord, I cannot leave you thus ;
Whate'er befalls your noble feelings,
Reflects a share of grief on Belmont's.

VAL. But this I pray thee — leave me now.

BELT. But you did speak of blood !

VAL. A vapor of the brain ——

'Twas a mere vapor ; a misty troubled cloud,
That for a moment thicken'd on my sight :
Like blood — ay, like it, I say——
A whimsy vapor floating from the grave :—
Bearing aloft upon its pilotage,
Dishonor's curse.—Leave me, leave me.
Reflective solitude, alone can bind
My thoughts, down to their rightful place.
Leave me —

[*Exit Belmont.*]

Now then sweet patience, parent of all good ;

[*Draws out the handkerchief from his bosom with one
hand, and takes up the dagger with the other.*]

Teach me to gaze upon these awful signatures, ——
And balance duty with their weighty sense ;
That so its influence may o'erpoise unruly thought ;
Which doth so load me with its brimful measure,
That my purs'd brain can scarcely bear its burden.
A mother's guilty blood drunk by a father's dagger !!
The brightness of its steel, dimm'd like the eye
It closed for ever ——

The glittering gems that stud its handle,
Smear'd alike with gore ; — their brilliance tarnish'd
Speaks in sad mock'ry the poor sinner's fate :
Like a faded brightness, which her beauty
Lingering hung upon the stem of life ;
Beneath the incrust of dishonor.——

What tears? ay tears; but they should be of blood:
A voluntary tribute from my stagnant heart,
To garnish up my present horror, and—
To cope with this stern ensign; which speaks nought
But murderous shedding of that stream,
Which first lent me it's current.—

I am unmanned ——

Sure, 'twas not kindly done, Gonsalvo, to heap
This blasting evidence upon my loaded brain;
And thus o'erglut my sight, with murder's bloody knife.
Perhaps my father willed it so—
That I might know myself.—
Go get thee hence; and sheath thee out of sight—
Where yet thy steel may have occasion
To cool the burning current in my veins.

[Hides the dagger in his bosom.]

And thou stain'd remnant, wash'd in human gore,
The fatal color of death's livery,——
Hence —— Get thee hence.

[Hides the handkerchief in his bosom.]

*Enter BELTIMONT in haste: with a cloak in his hand,
and a tattered piece to match a corner, from which
it had been torn.*

BELT. I scarce can think but that I am asleep;
And dreaming of a murderous plot,
Which doth so blaze upon my senses,
That their keenness is benumb'd with wonder.
Look, look, my lord; the colors are the same,
And this piece matches most precisely,

With its tattered fellow.

VAL. What fresh and wonderous deed of murder
Comes to cross me now ?
Sure every hair upon my head
Will have a sep'rate horror to start up at.
Speak, Belmont ; quickly speak out this evil.

BELT. When a few minutes past I left you, my dear
lord,

So sorely press'd on by affliction's troubl'd thoughts,
Which seem'd to stir your reason's fortitude ;
I sought Signor Gonsalvo, thinking that he
Might have the power to calm your sorrow :
And with a hasty step, I rush'd into his chamber.
He started from his seat,
And seizing his rapier, which lay beside him,
He did so furiously rush upon me,
That I was compell'd adroitly to defend myself.
Then he heaped dreadful curses on me
For intrusion, and bade me quit his presence.
I stood like one entranced, struck dumb
With wonder at his altered mien ;
And at the strange confusion which surrounded him.
Close at his feet a heap of papers lay,
In torn up fragments : upon the table
Various packets tied which he did gather up,
And cramm'd as hastily into a leathern bag ;
As tho' he'd been besieged, and lack'd the time
To make himself secure of some rich treasure.
I turn'd a hasty glance about the room :
Here lay a suit of clothes, and there a heap of linen ;
Indeed, all sorts of garments were scatter'd on the floor,
In strange confusion. Again he bade me

Quit his presence ; and I had obeyed ;
But suddenly my eye was meteor struck :
For I beheld, not far from where he stood,
An evidence, that in disguise he'd sought
My late dear master's life.

VAL. Gonsalvo seek my father's life !

'Tis a base fabrication.

BELT. Nay then but listen to me ; 'tis most true.
I, scarce believing what I saw, seiz'd on
The tatter'd cloak, and found too clearly
That it match'd the very piece, which with these hands
I'd torn from an assassin, whose knife I stay'd
From entering my dear master's heart.
'Tis not two months ago.

VAL. Ha ! beware ; upon thy life beware
That thou dost speak the truth.
How could this e'er have chanced ?
An attempt upon my father's life
And I not hear of it ?—Impossible !

BELT. It is most true my lord, and with my life
I'll stand to it. The night was still and sultry ;
The moon was up: my master was in bed.
I had laid down and was fast falling to repose,
When suddenly I felt my sleeve pulled
By my poor dog John ; who ran towards
My master's door : at that same instant I heard
A smother'd groan ; I sprang into the room,
And caught a murd'rous arm, as it was falling
With a poignard, aim'd at my master's breast.
The villain's left hand tightly clench'd his throat,
Which he soon loosen'd to defend himself.
I seiz'd upon him with the strength of vengeance.

We struggl'd desperately : he strove to stab me,
But in vain. At length with a sudden jerk,
He disengag'd himself, and sprang to the open
Window. I caught him as he fled ;
But only to secure part of his cloak,
Which I tore away as he rush'd from the window.
I followed him—but he escaped.

This is the part I kept, and this the other.

VAL. Wonder and horror are but little phrases
For the feelings which do stir my nature up ;
But wherefore knew I not of this attack before ?
It was thy duty to inform me.

BELT. My master bade me strictly keep it from you,
By Signor Gonsalvo's own advice.

VAL. 'Tis a mysterious tale ; and but that
Strange misgivings thwart my better thoughts,
I'd say thou liest with a fiend's false tongue.
Where is Gonsalvo ? If thy tale be true,——
He shall make answer to a son's resentment.

BELT. Stay, stay, my dearest lord ; I've yet to tell you
That, which will call forth your fortitude to bear.

VAL. What ! hast thou yet more evil news ?
But trust me thou canst not astonish me.

BELT. But 'tis a thing which doth involve
The future in such mist, that I have scarce
The heart to tell you.

VAL. Then set thy fears at rest.
I have a fortitude which yearns towards the grave ;
For I am sick of life——Doth it reach there ?

BELT. Alas ! my lord, it never can reach there.

VAL. Then boldly pour out horror's essence ;
For if there be a prospect of repose,

Beyond the limits of it's pow'r, I can
With calmness hear whate'er thou hast to tell me.

BELT. Then, my dear lord, Signor Gonsalvo hath
escap'd—

And fled I—know not whither.

VAL. Escap'd ! what means't thou ?

BELT. When I discover'd that the foul attempt
Was his, I call'd him a base murd'rous villain ;
And did accuse him of having raised
His cowardly hand, to stab an unprotected man :
That very man his best and kindest friend.
But with a hoarse loud laugh of scorn he did deride me,
And call'd me an officious villain,
For having snatch'd his victim from his grasp.
He bade me tell you that he cursed you
From his heart ; and that you might search vainly
For your title and estates ; for that he alone
Had pow'r to reinstate you—and sent you
His defiance. Then on a sudden snatching up
The leathern bag, he swiftly fled out at the door,
Which op'ns on the corridor, and lock'd it after him.
I burst it open with a desperate effort ;
But the vile fugitive was gone——
All happen'd quicker than my speech can tell it.

VAL. Appalling deadly traitor !——

Then are his late strange looks of myst'ry solv'd,
Which his vile artifice could scarcely mask,
To bear him through this master-piece of villany.
Then am I left an unknown beggar—
To seek out fortune as she lists to smile.
But in the present tenor of my mind,
It matters not ; save that I've lost the pow'r,

To punish the fell traitor. He hath evaded me ;—
But tho' I'm forc'd to brave the storm of poverty,
While yet life clings around my sicken'd heart
I'll seek him though I perish. [Exeunt.

SCENE II. GONSALVO'S Chamber.

Enter BELTIMONT.

BELT. How could I let him so escape me ?
Surely some devil in his 'special service
Did pinion me, and stick me to the spot ;
Or, could I never, with eyes so seeing him,
And ears so cramm'd with his intents,
Have let the villain rush from me into safety.
There yet may be some vestige left—
A strange hope doth invite me to the search—
[Searches about, and finds a packet, among the
torn papers.

What's this ? Ha !——
Here's the hand writing of my late dear master,
And many other papers bound up with it.
Yet do I fear, were they of moment,
They'd not been cast among the refuse here :
Unless indeed the saving hand of all,
Hath snatch'd them from his grasp—
Ha ! [Hides himself.

Enter GONSALVO, ANTION, and SEBASTIAN, cautiously.

GONS. Antion, secure that door,
While I search for the lost papers—

All seems the same as when I left—
'Twas a mad oversight, that I should thus
Have lost the very documents,
On which my future hopes are built.
Should they but reach Valencia's hand,
And he escape this trusty silencer,

[*Half draws a dagger.*

Then are my hopes, which years have wrought up
To my sanguine wishes, o'erthrown in one
Great sweep of fate ; and I an outcast,
On whose head a price will soon be set—

[*Searches for papers.*

'Tis vain—search baffles me,—
And doth but irritate my urgent wishes
For Valencia's life.
Could we not now surprise him,
And make end of him at once ?
What say you to this batch of enterprise ?
I'll lead you with an arm, whose desperation
Shall secure success. Come, say the word ;
And, piercing like an arrow thro' that door,
I'll swiftly reach the heart of that curs'd stag,
Who so invites me to be herald of his fate.

Ant. 'Twould be rash and uncertain to attempt.

I say, as far as I'm concern'd, let us begone.
'Twould be like braving a lion in his den ;
Where his wild tribe would seize us tooth and claw,
And nought would soon remain but our hack'd carcasses,
To tell that we had fought like devils for our lives.
I'll not engage upon uncertain ground ;
So let us make a safe retreat, while yet we've time
I do not relish, for my part, these open mid-day

Hazardous attempts ; no good doth e'er come of them.
Gentlemen of our condition, always love
The safest side of day, in these mysterious
Entrances.

Give me the windings of the forest's shaggy gloom,
And then I care not whether day or night.
You came here, Signor, to seek some papers ;
And as they are not to be found, let us begone,
And in a safer place, concert some wiser plan
To entrap your destined prey.

What say you to this, Sebastian ?

SEBAS. I say the same, let us begone.

GONS. What ; are you both afraid ?

ANT. Afraid ! what I afraid ?

[*Half draws.*]

No ; but I'm prudent. Do you mean thus
To call my courage into question ? No man
Has ever dar'd to call me coward to my face :
I'd make him swallow it at my sword's end,
And send it rattling back into his throat :
Ay, to his heart's content.

GONS. Nay man, be not so anger'd at a jest.
I always thought thee brave, ay, as a tiger
Lashing at his prey. Since 'tis thy better counsel,
Let us begone, and take more needful caution
To our aid. Sebastian, give a look out.

[*Sebastian cautiously reconnoitres, then beck-
ons Gonsalvo and Antion, who creep out,
and are followed by Belmont.*]

SCENE III. *A Forest.*

Enter GONSALVO, ANTION, and SEBASTIAN.

Gons. Valencia ———

Must be dealt with ere to-morrow's sun rise :—
And we must not lose sight of any chance,
Which may throw him within our power.
Antion, meantime you must send off Rinaldo
Full speed ; and bid him seek with aptitude,
An interview with the lady Floranthe's father,
The Marquis Rimini, and tell him, that if
He haste not to the convent without loss of time,
His daughter will be snatch'd for ever from his reach,
By an unknown adventurer ;
Who dares to build his fortunes up,
By matchling with the wealth and honors of his house.
The Marquis, no doubt, when he doth hear the news,
In direful rage will instantly set forth,
In order to recal his daughter.
She being gone, and safely out of reach ;
We then can draw Valencia into our nets,
By Osard, who must assume the messenger ;
As if Floranthe had dispatch'd him in all haste,
To tell Valencia she'd escap'd her father,
And awaited him in secret within the forest.
Should he in any doubt speed to the convent,
Then will the story be confirm'd ; she having been
So suddenly remov'd ; and with a lover's wildness,
Will he quickly leap into our power.
Some lucky chance may lead him to our toils

Ere that ; but if not, then are we sure of him.
We will meet here, upon Osard's return.
So speed our progress in this weighty press,
Which draws our projects to a glorious close.

[Exeunt, Belmont watching and following them.]

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *Convent Garden.*

Enter VALENCIA.

VAL. If sorrow swells the heart—
Sure mine must be o'ergrown, almost to bursting.
I feel it like a burden, which doth press
Upon my life. Is grief so cowardly—
That it doth shrink from its own weight, and leave
The ruin it hath made to totter as it lists ?
E'en so—
Our gusts of passion whirl us to and fro,
And their deep eddies drag our senses down.
Oh man ! ——
Where is the greatness of thy noble strength ;
Which, like a culprit bending to the axe,
Doth sink beneath the fabric of thine own
Desires and passions ?—
How am I toss'd upon a gath'ring flood ;
Whose tributary streams flow from revenge,
Love, and despair —— Revenge ? —— no, not revenge ;
I seek for justice —— not revenge ——

Revenge springs from the dregs of sin :
It is the villain's watchword for his direst deeds ;
The coward's subterfuge for stabbing in the dark.
Man's nature should claim better ground
To battle with himself upon, and bear aloft
The palm of justice to control his angry thoughts.—
Love burns so fiercely at my aching heart,
That it consumes my resolutions as they spring—
Oh my Floranthe ! can I part from thee ?
Yes, yes, it must be so ——— For ever ?
Yes, for ever ——— Oh ! thou brief word !
Why dost thou carry on thy certainty ?——
Despair's wild phrensy, like a shadow'd fiend
That flits across me, and in spite,
Doth buffet ev'ry quibble of prolific thought,
Which strives an hundred ways to evade its influence.
A wandering outcast beggar !—— is it come to this ?
It is —— Valencia, thou art more destitute—
Than e'er thy wayward phantasies were wont
To fear thou wouldst be —— yet am I what I am :
And there are means to rid this gorgeous mis'ry
Of its weight.——

[Draws the dagger from his bosom.]

Art thou a fiend to tell me with such truth,
'Thy bloody purpose ?—— or dost thou cling upon my
thoughts,
To tear asunder the close webbing of my brain ?
And thus evade the real use for which,
Thou dangerous minister of death, thou wer't
By devils instituted, to aid despair
In her wild inroads on the tortur'd mind.
What ! am I such a coward to gaze upon thee

With a longing eye? — and grasp thee
Yet more firmly in my desperate hand?
What am I thinking of?
I'm not myself — Shall I corrode thee
With a double stain — thou cursed instrument?
That doth so aptly urge me to a crime,
From which my daring hand should shrink,
With an instinctive dread —
Begone vile tempter — get thee from my grasp,
I will no longer trust thee in my impious hand.

[Hides the dagger again in his bosom.]

Ha! Floranthe comes.
Now slumber mischief, while a gleam of light
Breaks on thy frowning brow, and bids thee hence.
Floranthe
Like a heav'nly vision floats upon my sight,
To scare thee from thy hellish purposes —
She comes.

Enter FLORANTHE in haste.

Oh! thou my soul's dear saint! Wherefore these tears?
Why dost thou tremble thus?

FLOR. Valencia, I do come like an ill sounding bell,
To chime a dismal knell upon thine ear.
Oh! would that I could cheer thee, love,
And banish sorrow where it lab'ring sits!
But the sad truth doth fatally forbid me
This kind boon; and hard necessity
Doth urge my tongue to tell thee, dear Valencia,
That a few short hours, and — I shall be
Once more torn from thee.

An unknown hand hath given information
To the lady Abbess, that my father is
Now hast'ning with all speed, to bear me hence.
But trust me that my faith to thee, Valencia,
Shall remain as a firm rock, which doth withstand
The tempest's howling flood, whose mountain billows
Vainly dash, to rend it from it's base.

VAL. 'Tis well, 'tis well.—'tis as it should be—
My fate doth like a pendulum keep up
It's constant motion—but there will come a stop—
I lack of words to speak out my despair.

FLOR. Nay gaze not on me with so wild a look :
It chills my trembling heart—and—and—
Doubles all my agony at parting.

VAL. Parting, Floranthe, saidst thou ?

FLOR. Ay, dear Valencia, would I could not say so.

VAL. Floranthe,—we must part for ever.

FLOR. Oh ! bury that dread sentence in the abyss of
time

Which will unfold our destinies.

Valencia, dread not that which thou canst not yet see ;
'Tis tempting fate to do it's utmost.

Let hope fan up our thoughts with love's bright wings
To cheer our path, which tho' now rugged,
May be smother soon,

VAL. Hope's cup is drain'd—not e'en a dreg remains,
And I am left an outcast, and a beggar—
Yes, a nameless beggar —————

Oh my Floranthe ! if I could tear away the guise
That hides my burning heart,
And shew thee with what fierceness it's consum'd,
While a dread pois'nous canker eats away the root—

Oh! shield me reason, with thy steady hand,
And hold thine influence firmer in my brain;
Else will despair usurp thy quiet throne,
And raise the mutiny of madness
Amid my struggling senses.

How can I tear myself away from thee, for ever?

FLOR. If thou dost love me, talk not thus, Valencia.
The clouds of gloomy night are brighter far,
Than thy mysterious words; which threaten more
Than I dare think upon.

VAL. My gentle love; forgive this erring tongue,
Which like a torrent rushes on,
Regardless of its overwhelming pow'r.
But my Floranthe, we must part—
And e'en for ever—
All hope, all prospect—all; yes all at once
Is fled—and I am left a wand'ring beggar:
An outcast on the mercy of the winds;
Without a friend; almost without my senses,
To guide me in my wild and weary way.

FLOR. Without a friend, Valencia?

VAL. Ay—without a friend.

FLOR. And am I not thy friend?
Is thy Floranthe not thy most dear friend?

VAL. Heaven doth shine around thee,
And doth make thee more than all the earth to me.
Oh! I could stand for ever, and be fed
By gazing on thee—yet must we part, Floranthe.
Oh leave me while my resolution's clear.

FLOR. Leave thee—— Valencia, I will not leave
thee.

Think'st thou my love doth rest upon

The slight foundation of detested wealth?
I have enough for all our wants in my own pow'r.
Thy desolation makes me doubly rich;
Because I now can make thee proffer of
My own unworthy self, and that which it
Hath pleas'd kind heaven to show'r upon me.

VAL. Oh tempt me not; lest in a dream
Of such elysium, I forget my honesty;
And weave thy fate with mine, in that
Most sacred tie, which cannot be dissolv'd.
Can I become a villain, and snatch thee,
Like a common thief, away?
It must not — shall not be —
Floranthé, I once hoped the mystery
Which hung o'er me, would have cleared away;
But it has thicken'd to impenetrable gloom;
And I am buried 'neath it's shade,
I fear — for ever.

FLOR. And how can I thus leave thee dear Valencia?

VAL. By turning thy dear eyes to that bright summit,
Which thou wer't born to grace.
Leave me — and forget me — and when —
Yet no — I cannot bear thee to forget me —
And yet it should be so for thy dear sake.
Oh! I am very sad — but cannot, will not, weep.
The dew of sorrow does but dim the sight;
And should not often fall upon a manly cheek.
Floranthé! — Wilt thou forget me?

FLOR. Forget thee! — never.

Oh! banish these sad thoughts, and let us
Seek that altar, where our plighted faith
Will give me to thy troubled heart;

To heal it's wounds, and sooth it into peace.

VAL. I but add pang to pang, in trusting my frail ear
To drink so deeply of these dang'rous sounds.

I dare not, must not listen to thee ;

Nor trust my tongue the licence e'en to tell thee,

What my bursting heart would fain unfold.

I dare no longer stay —

May heaven guide and guard thee dearest saint,

And give thee that sweet peace, which can alone

Dwell in an angel's breast —

Nay, hold me not within thy tender grasp ;

I must break from it with a cruel force.

Oh ! clasp me not with these dear hands ;

Else shall I in a desperate moment,

Tear them cruelly away.

Forgive me, my Floranthe — we must — must part.

FLOR. Oh ! I will cling to thee while I have pow'r
To hold thee — yes till my constant heart
Bursts in the socket of frail life.

And e'en in death, when my poor spirit

Snaps the vital cord, that binds it in this world, —

Oh ! it shall hover o'er thee like a balmy dew,

And shrine thee with a guardian angel's care.

Valencia — thy —

[Faints, and is caught by Valencia.]

VAL. Hast thou indeed flown to thy kindred host ?

Or hath the hand of grief so press'd thy gentle heart,

That thy scar'd senses for a time do slumber

In the chaos of apparent death ? —

Oh ! thou my soul's bright treasure, if thou'rt gone,

I'll follow thee, though my own desp'rate hand

Inflict the blow ——— She breathes not — Floranthe !

What no breath!—no sigh! no motion in this heart!
And these dear lips (*kisses her*) cold!
Ay, cold as death's icy fingers.

[Bears her off.

[Bertha appears in the background.

VALENCIA re-enters, without seeing BERTHA.

Hold mischief! ——— still thou dost pursue me;
Halt where I will ——— thy foul hand
Doth paint me up a hideous vision,
To tempt a search for thee, thou ready fiend.
[Draws the dagger from his bosom.

Ha! then am I indeed a coward!
Yes 't must be so ——— what matters what I am,
For I do greet thee with a joyful eye,
Which fain would have thee close it.
Farewell thou dreary world! ———

[Bertha advances unseen towards Valencia.

Thus will I follow thee, dear saint —

[Raises the dagger to stab himself—Bertha catches hold of his arm, and wrests the dagger from his hand: whilst Valencia, conscience-stricken, continues to gaze in vacant horror with his face averted from Bertha.

BER. Hold! by that mercy thou hast need to ask,
By raising up this guilty hand,
In humble supplication 'gainst such deeds.
Wouldst thou take that, which is not thine to take?
And thus become a robber to thy God?
Shrink thou vile worm, that dar'st to crawl

Upon the precincts of that wond'rous leap,
 Which hurls the spirit headlong to make awful answer,
 Where such a deed would stand before thee,
 Register'd in blood of thine own spilling.
 This rebel hand hath strove to end the turmoil
 Of thy discontent — Oh live ! rash man ;
 And by sincere repentance make atonement
 For thy crime. Behold in me a sinful wretch,
 Who in addition to her other guilt,
 Once dared to raise against her life,
 A weapon such as this — Ha !

[Raises the dagger, and screams.

It is the same — speak — tell me.
 Oh ! where got you this foul instrument of death ?
 Years have roll'd by in the great flood of time,
 Yet doth it stand upon my memory's brink,
 As if that dreadful moment was call'd back
 To pierce me with fresh horror.
 Speak tell me whence —

[Valencia turns to look at her.

Ha ! —————

[She screams again.

Strange visions of the past do dance upon
 My dizzy brain ——— My sight is overcharg'd.
 I — I feel the rush of nature at my heart ;
 And the wild transports of a mother,
 Flutter round it, with a thousand hopes and fears.

VAL. Who art thou, strange mysterious being,
 Who thus hath snatch'd me from the jaws of death,
 And doth so tamper with me by a mock'ry
 Of that which cannot be ?

BER. If ever nature spoke within a heart,

She doth in her true language tell me,
That thou art my son.
The second self of a most injur'd father :
That very look doth swear a thousand truths ;
And this reminder of a guilty effort
To snatch away my life, confirms the fact.
Is not thy name Valencia ?

VAL. Valencia is my name ———
But this thou might'st have heard.
What canst thou know else of me ? — and yet —
Thou must have seen that fatal relic — or
Thou couldst not so have known it — ay
And so have known its use — perhaps
Thou didst behold the deed ?

BER. 'Twas I who did it. I — thy guilty mother.

VAL. Oh ! trifle not thus with my compound mis'ries,
Which make up a sum of deadly weight to bear.
I tell thee, that my mother fell a victim —
By my father's hand.
With that stain'd knife of death — he murder'd her.
A penitent poor sinner as she was ;—
He murder'd her ———

His words are drawn in blood upon my thoughts.

BER. 'Tis false, 'tis false ; by all his wrongs 'tis false.

VAL. Nay, with his dying breath ; e'en in the last
Convulsive struggle of expiring life,
He did proclaim her dead — and that —
He caught the dagger, dripping with her life's blood.

BER. Yes, yes, he did ; but 'twas this hand
Which aim'd at self destruction.
A dishonor'd, guilty wretch, stung with remorse
And shame ; I could not bear the conflict :

And in a moment of delirious horror,
Aimed a blow in hopes to strike my heart.
My husband caught at my uplifted hand,
To stem it's desp'rate course; but ere he reach'd it,
My side was pierced.
He drew the reeking poignard from the wound :
My senses fled — I never saw him more.
I was borne instantly away,
And he supposed me dead.

VAL. If this indeed be true,—
Oh ! I am standing on the brink of hope,
Which doth so vibrate on my heavy heart,
That it doth leap and struggle to cast off the burden.
Thy words do seem the oracles of truth,
And nature whispers that thou art — my mother ———
[Rushes into her arms.]

BER. I am indeed thy mother —
Thy most guilty mother ———
Canst thou forgive me all the wrongs,
Which I have heaped upon thy father ?

VAL. Oh ! talk not thus my dearest mother,
My father did forgive thee — and dost thou ask
Forgiveness of thy son ?

BER. Thy father didst thou say ? did he forgive me ?

VAL. He did ——— but — I do charge thee,
By the sacred memory of my father,
To disclose to me the villain, who did
Rob him of his peace — oh ! if he doth but live !

BER. He does.

VAL. Ha ! How know you this ?

BER. By the most certain evidence.

VAL. His name ?

BER. The Count Antonio.

VAL. Where to be found?

BER. He is — that self-same monster, who hath ever
Shar'd thy father's friendship and his fortunes :
Whom thou hast only known under a disguise.

VAL. But utter the foul name
To clench the iron bondage of my horror.
My blood doth stagnate with the unnatural pressure
Of this great surprise ——— Speak out the name,
And it's dread echo will respond from hell :
For he hath surely sprung upon the earth,
And is one of those fiends, who doth bestride
The mis'ries of man, in hopes that he may
Work them up to that vast summit of despair,
Whose dizzy height doth tempt some desp'rate act ;
From which he hath the pow'r to hurl them down,
Into his native ——— hell.
Such is the fiend Gonsalvo —
Oh ! what a noble structure hath he overturn'd !
A temple of such majestic workmanship,
That nothing could corrode it's exquisite interior.
But the gnawing injuries of this subtle devil,
At length have sapp'd its firm foundation :
And it hath fallen, moulder'd at its base ;
And is now lying in the lap of earth :
The cradle of death's last and lasting sleep.

BER. Oh ! I have tasted bitterly of his revenge :
My weary life hath amply proved him
An inhuman fiend ——— whose deadly hatred
To thy father, drew him and all he lov'd,
Within his ruinous grasp ———
When I fell senseless at thy father's feet,

This monster had me borne away, and under
 The false guise of feeling for his injur'd friend,
 Undertook the painful office of seeing me
 Placed privately within the tomb —
 I was consign'd to the charge of a confed'rate ;
 With secret orders for my instant death,
 Should any chance of life appear.
 I did recover ; but he spar'd my life,
 In hopes some future benefit might arise,
 From having the dark fiend within his pow'r ;
 And did report me to him dead.—Thus was I left
 To linger in repentant solitude :
 The just reward of such a crime as mine.
 Thy father's death Antion made known to me,
 And all the circumstances which attended thee,
 On my bent knees, in humble supplication
 Did I sue for liberty, but in vain.
 Until, enrag'd with the denials of high reward,
 Which the false Gonsalvo had promis'd him
 From time to time, Antion vow'd vengeance 'gainst him,
 And brought me hither for a temp'rary shelter ;
 And did swear to guard thee, my dear son,
 From the villanous Gonsalvo ; and proclaim thee
 To the state as the rightful heir —————
 To the Duke di Montalto — who was thy father.
 Gonsalvo being the next heir to thee, would claim
 Thy title and estates — this doth he aim at.

VAL. The Duke di Montalto !— bore my dear father
 That noble name ?—And thus hath he in exile,
 Been the dupe of that foul miscreant ?
 But I will bring the monster to a just tribunal.

*[Turns towards the spot to which he had
 borne Floranthe.]*

But wherefore do honors crown me with a wreath ?
There lies the monument, within whose shrine,
Rest all my earthly hopes.
Ah ! she lives — Floranthe lives —

[Rushes off followed by Bertha.]

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE I. *A Forest.*

Enter BERTHA and VALENCIA.

VAL. Now do I feel unshackled as the air :
And will soon bring the miscreant to account
For his foul deeds.

BER. But, my dear son, take caution for thy guide.
Oh ! do not run upon the risk of life.
Antion hath inform'd me, that the traitor
Waits but to entrap thee into his pow'r,
And hath some fiend-like plot laid 'gainst thy life.
Oh ! hasten into safety.
I like not this drear forest, which thou hast to pass ;
Let me go with thee.
Arm'd with a mother's fears, my woman's strength
By an instinctive impulse would increase,
And shield e'en thy dear life, should the terrific
Sight of danger hover near thee.

VAL. Nay, nay, dear mother, it must not be.
Let me in safety see thee to the convent gate.

Thou wouldst retard my progress thro' the forest's mazes.
This path have I so often trod, that I do know it
Better than myself. Come come; let me in safety
See thee to the gate. Return to my Floranthe,
And when I've seen Antion, who thou say'st
Is now in search of me, I will return to thee
And my sweet love. Come, come.

[*Leads her off.*]

Enter GONSALVO and ANTION.

GONS. I tell thee 'tis Valencia and Floranthe.

ANT. No, no; some village lovers who have stray'd:
Peace; let them go: if we attack them
We must stop their mouths;

[*Half draws a dagger.*]

(And that were needless bloodshed;)
Or give them cause to raise the hue and cry,
And so be putting this Valencia on his guard.
Let us be certain ere we make the blow.
Come noble Duke; for that thou'lt shortly be;
Hast thou consider'd of my propositions?
And of the settlement of that old score
Between us? 'Tis time that thou shouldst honor
Thy great promises ——
Again I say; where is that case of jewels,
Belonging to the Duchess whom I murder'd for thee?
And which thou saidst were mine —
As soon as the old Duke was put away?
And those same heavy bags,
Containing the twelve thousand ducats?
Come, come; a reck'ning there must be 'twixt us

On that old score, or we do part;
And not commence another.

GONS. Let all be settled first, and then I will
Enrich thee past thy hopes. Should I give thee
That, which of itself would make thee rich enough,
Then thou might'st leave me in the lurch.

[*Looking out.*

ANT. What! dost thou doubt my honor?

GONS. No — 'Tis he, 'tis he; look he doth return
alone.

This doth exceed my hopes.

ANT. Ay sure enough thou'rt right.

But let him pass further on

Before we seize upon him — Come by.

[*Gonsalvo and Antion hide. Valencia passes
with his arms crossed, in deep thought;
Gonsalvo and Antion follow him, and
Belmont creeps after them.*

SCENE II. *Another part of the Forest.*

*Enter ANTION and OSMOND, dragging in VALENCIA
bound.*

ANT. Now then let's tie him to a tree to have him safe.
Be quiet can't you, have a little patience:
Patience I say, patience; it cures all evils.

[*Binding Valencia to a tree assisted by Osmond.*

VAL. Patience base slave? Thou hast so 'thrall'd me
In thy treacherous snare, else should this hand
Deal thee its patience with a vengeance.

ANT. That's the very reason I've ta'en such care of thee:

Kept thee out of harm, and out of doing harm.
Why we did leave that Belmont, fighting
Like a triple devil, as tho' he had three swords,
Each in a pond'rous hand, show'ring profusive blows
On his assailants, with wondrous aptitude of skill :
As if old Cerberus, the dog of hell,
Had turn'd his tongues into three swords, to lash and
lick

With furious defiance, a triple host of foes.
Gonsalvo and our comrades, whom we left
Dealing their best to overcome th' intrusive fool,
Did seem to fall but shortly in th' encounter.
And I believe I scann'd aright, for to my seeming,
Ere my eye turned from the busy work,
One did grapple with the earth.

VAL. And am I thus pent up :

'Thrall'd into bondage by a coward's trap ;
While that brave man doth vainly risk his life
In my defence ? If thou wilt let me free,
And give me back my sword, — if heav'n spare me,
I will reward thee past thy sanguine hopes.
Perhaps thou know'st not who I am,
And doth encounter in a villain's cause,
Without the knowledge of the 'vantage thou might'st
reap,
From doing an act of justice.

ANT. I know thee well ;
Thou art the rightful Duke of Montalto ;
And I will keep thee safe, I promise thee.

VAL. Ah ! then thou know'st Gonsalvo's foul intents.

ANT. To be sure I do —
Let thee free ? no no : but here's thy sword,

And use it if thou canst.

[Throws the sword at his feet.]

VAL. Thou know'st Antion?

ANT. Antion? Ay, what of him?

Know'st thou ought of him?

VAL. Yes, yes, he is my friend.

OSM. Ha! ha! ha! Antion thy friend?

You know him do you? ha! ha! ha!

Enter GONSALVO running, sword in hand.

GONS. Ten thousand furies seize that ruffian;
He hath escaped.

VAL. Thank heaven!

GONS. Peace villain.

ANT. What three good arms 'gainst one,
And let that one escape?

GONS. Ay, but 'tis a wondrous one.
From whose death dealing blow Sponello fell:
And I with Ortament, with yet more fierce attack,
Fell too.

With a mighty effort, fighting all the while,
Did Belmont retreat with an alertness,
Which amaz'd me; almost flying backward,
As though a magic spring carried him along
O'er each impediment. Into a gloomy covert
Near the stricken oak, we followed him:
But there did he evade us.

ANT. I know the cranky corner which thou mean'st;
'Tis a wild'ring maze, and should he know it's 'tricacies;
He will escape; but should he not, then is he
Safe enough; I will soon bring him out—

Stay here till I return. But mark me well —

[*Aside to Gonsalvo.*]

If thou dost venture to stray from our bargain,
By striking the last blow ere I return ;
Remember what I say — our friendship's at an end.
For I've a small account to reckon with
Valencia, ere we put him by — so mark me —
Let him be living when I do come back again,
Or dread my wounded honor — You understand me.
Come Osmond.

[*Rushes off with Osmond.*]

GONS. Audacious villain! but let my projects
Firmly weave themselves into a certain knot ——
Then will I speedily out with thy life's base gore.

[*Aside, looking after Antion.*]

VAL. That I should be thus shackled,
And this miscreant in my sight.

[*Struggling to unloose the ropes.*]

GONS. Unruly slave be still.
Thou cursed offspring of my bitterest hate ;
Now do I triumph :
Now doth the fruit of all my schemes grow ripe,
And enterprize hath doubled my best hopes.
First my revenge hath drunk a copious draught ;
And my ambition hath clim'd safely up,
And rests on the broad way of certainty.
I will ere long drain thy heart dry,
Thou scorpion to my sight.

VAL. Inhuman coward! miscreant! fiend!
Who thus dar'st vaunt because my hands are bound.
But loose this cord, and by my father's wrongs —
I'll teach thee, that his son doth bear his inj'ries

Upon his sword.

Gons. Base, bragging beggar ; let me tell thee,
That I hate thee for thy father's sake.

He stepp'd 'twixt me and my ambitious hopes,
When he did wed thy mother :

I lov'd her not, but her great wealth and pow'r
Had dazzl'd me ; and but for him, tho' I was poor,
My birth had gained me the rich spoil.

He bore away the prize in triumph from my grasp,
And from that time revenge and hatred
Nestl'd at my heart ; hatch'd venom in its core ;
Distill'd it's gall, which I did lay within

My traps for him, cover'd with homied words :

And I have conquer'd in the deadly strife.

Now listen, and I'll make thee totter —

As an earthquake rives the earth —

'Twas I who robb'd thy father of his wife —

Whom he had robbed me of — 'Twas I

Who had her borne away, when she had aim'd
To take away her life —

She did recover — and I had her murder'd —

'Twas I who held a dagger near thy father's heart,
And Belmont did save him —

I did administer a slow corroding poison

To thy curs'd father, and it gnaw'd away his life.

Of late I did increase the doses — and sent him
Headlong to the other world —

When speech no longer loiter'd on his tongue,
And the cold dew of death pearl'd on his brow ;

But ere his ear was deaf to human sounds,

I breath'd within it, the blasting secrets

Which I tell thee now ———

Dost thou remember the last parting look
He fixed on me — That look repaid me —
Ay, for all my toils, and told me more than
Curses could have done —

I was reveng'd in that last look — ha ! ha ! ha ! ha !

VAL. Oh Nature ! lend me pow'r to break asunder
These vile bonds ; my blood doth like a boiling surge,
So bubble in it's course.

[Struggles, and breaks the rope asunder and springs upon Gonsalvo — dashes his sword from his hand and throws him down. Gonsalvo struggles and at length draws a dagger which he aims at Valencia, who throws him from him and takes up the sword.]

Now thou inhuman fiend, thy life is at my bidding.
Accurs'd monster, I will not take advantage of thee,
Tho' a father's blood flows in the gap betwixt us ;
And nerves my hand to deal out retribution.

[Takes up his own sword, and throws Gonsalvo his.]
Now stand — and defend thyself.

[They fight.]

BELTIMONT rushes in and attacks Gonsalvo.

BELT. Ha ! villain.

VAL. Off, off brave man ; not for thy precious life,
Which I do value far above my own,
Would I allow thee any share, in dealing
With this miscreant.

Do thou keep off his hell-hounds, while I teach him
The just end of his foul murd'rous career.
Once more come on thou fiend.

[They fight desperately, Gonsalvo falls.]

GONS. May hell gape wide and swallow thee.
Ere I do cease to see thee, thou hated reptile.

[*Still trying to fight with Valencia.*

Thou hast struck on my life. The shudd'rings of death —
Do begin to creep through my chilled blood —
My heart grows sick —— and faintly — I —
I'll struggle yet —

[*Half rising, and aiming at Valencia.*

VAL. 'Tis vain, 'tis vain ——
I will not taunt a fallen enemy ;
Though that enemy be Gonsalvo.
Use thy last moments as a dying man,
And to thy pray'r for mercy —— I will say Amen.

Enter BERTHA and ANTON.

ANT. What Valencia free ?
And thou base caitiff, art thou there ?
Seize on the traitor, and bear him hence.
I do now proclaim thee the Duke of Montalto.

[*To Valencia.*

Long live the Duke of Montalto.
Bear this vile miscreant off to justice.

VAL. He hath almost paid his last debt, in this world's
Great account. Strive to let him die better
Than he hath liv'd —— I dare thee to come near him.

ANT. Speak to him lady.

BER. If in the pangs of death ——

[*To Gonsalvo.*

GONS. Ha! ——
Hath the earth yawn'd, and cast thee on my sight,
Like a dread magnet, to draw out my eyes;

And mix the gall of horror in my congealing blood ?
 And as my parting knell to vibrate on mine ear —
 Hell ; hell awaits thee ———
 Thy bloody deeds do play a fountain on thee,
 Which weighs thee down to hell ———
 My brain's on fire ——— ——— ———
 Begone or I will buffet with thee shadow.

[*Half rising and looking at Bertha.*

I'll brandish in thy airy visage my trusty steel,
 And put thee, worthless mockery, to flight.
 The air drinks up my breath ———
 Doom's midnight shrouds me in its black'ning smoke ;
 And fiends do lave me with their liquid fires.
 I see a yawning gulf ——— The furnace
 Of hell's deep abyss — doth flare upon my sight.
 Yet ; yet, one minute stay ——— only one minute.
 Oh ! I am sinking ——— yet one ——— one

[*Dies.*

SCENE III. *Near the Convent.*

Enter FLORANTHE.

FLOR. The moon's new crescent, night's bright diadem,
 Doth peer above the yet light face of day :
 And like a silv'ry shadow in the air,
 Betokens, that great heaven's blazonry,
 The stars, are lighting up their brilliant lamps,
 To stud the universal canopy.
 The air breathes lightly, and day's sleepy eye,
 Will close ere long upon the view of man.
 Peace sweetly slumbers on fair nature's bosom,

And all around seems to invite content,
And calm reflection's grateful attributes.
Yet here all is not right —
My flutt'ring heart hath something strange within,
Which thought doth strive in vain to counterpoise.
I would this night were past, and that
Fair morning's hood were quickly opening,
To unfold her smiling face. Something doth
Whisper me into mysterious fear ;
What is't ? Can aught befall Valencia ?
This question doth o'erleap an answer,
By the doubtful import, which my coward heart
Doth frame it in. That man who in all haste,
Some short time since came breathless here, to fetch
Valencia's mother, did proclaim him safe ;
Yet what could such haste mean ? perhaps some plot —
Who knows but that my love ——— My thoughts
Do sicken me at heart, and come what will,
I'll seek the path, that I did see them take.
Now speed me to my love. [Exit.

SCENE IV. *Convent Garden.*

Enter VALENCIA and FLORANTHE.

FLOR. Ha ! what blood is this upon thee ?

VAL. A villain's.

FLOR. A villain's ? Then thou indeed hast been
In danger. But art thou surely safe ?

VAL. More safe than ever I have been before ;
For the foul traitor who hath sought my life,
Hath met a fate, to which his crimes have brought him :

He is no more.

But I will tell thee love, all that hath happen'd.

FLOR. I see thee safe Valencia, and my grateful feelings
Are beyond my speech: yet doth a ling'ring sadness,
Strangely weigh my spirits down; almost
To make me weep: I know not now for why.

VAL. Oh! let me see thee smile Floranthe.
All danger's at an end; and nought remains,
But that thy father should give his consent;
For now I can make proffer of a station,
Worthy to be filled by thee.

MARQ. DI R. (without) Floranthe!

FLOR. Ha! my father's voice!
Why do I tremble thus?

MARQUIS DI RIMINI comes forward.

MARQ. DI R. What! have I caught thee villain?

[*Draws.*

I am not quite so young, but still I'll tell thee
Quickly what I mean. I have not patience
For more words: my sword shall speak my meaning
better.

Defend thyself base ruffian; I will not
Murder thee. Defend thyself—

FLOR. Hold, my dearest father! but a few words,
And all will be explain'd to thy best wishes.

MARQ. DI R. Away; thou hast deceived me: away.
Draw villain, draw I say.

VAL. Never! 'gainst the father of Floranthe.

MARQ. DI R. Thou low born reptile, darest thou parley
Thus; and 'gainst the edge of my just sword,

Vaunt of thy cowardly forbearance ?

This is past my endurance.

*[Rushes at Valencia. Floranthe throws herself
instantaneously between Valencia and her
father, and receives his sword in her bosom.]*

Oh ! my dear child ! my darling child !

Help ! help ! I've murder'd my dear child. Help !

[Runs out for assistance.]

FLOR. 'Tis well — I've sav'd thy life Valencia,
And the pangs of death will lie more gently on me.

I would I could have liv'd, but I do feel

Those shiverings around my heart, which will —

Ere long, forbid it to beat more.

Cheer thee, dear love :

And when time shall have spun out transitory life —

Ah ! my Valencia, then — — —

My sight is fading — — — raise me higher,

[Valencia raises her.]

Yet higher still — — — Oh ! let me gaze upon thy face,

Until my eyes lack sight to see thee with.

VAL. Yes — thou hast sav'd my life dear saint, but what
can e'er

Make up the value of that precious price,

Which thou hast paid with thy dear blood ?

Oh ! it is sad to part thus my Floranthe :

But 'twill not be for long ; for I will

Quickly follow thee.

FLOR. Valencia — — — Oh Valencia ! —

'Tis hard indeed to part ; but I conjure thee

With my dying breath — — —

Yes — — — I conjure thee — — — by — —

I'm dizzy — — — faint — — — and sick —

Now lay me gently — — — on the earth

Bless thee ———— bless the-e — —

[*Dies.*

VAL. Why do I gaze thus wildly on thee?
 Why stand I in this horrid stupefaction,
 While within my grasp I have a certain cure?
 United in the arms of death, we'll slumber love;
 But our cold cradle will ————
 Where am I wandering? ———— Why to the grave —
 This is a key that opes the flood of life,
 And quickly will admit me thro' the gates of death.

[*Stabs himself.*

Ha! voices approach —
 But no earthly power can part us now.
 My mother too — poor mother —
 I had forgotten thee — in this great breach of nature.

*Enter BERTHA, MARQUIS DI RIMINI, BELTIMONT,
 ANTION, ABBESS and NUNS.*

MARQ. DI R. Ha! she's gone — heaven hath ta'en her
 from me,
 In vengeance for my rashness.

BER. (screams) Valencia thou art bleeding!
 Art thou murdered too?
 Hath thy dread fury slaughter'd my dear son?

[*To the Marquis di Rimini.*

VAL. The deed's my own — farewell — farewell.
 Forgive me mother! —

[*Dies.*

BER. Oh do not sink thus — drooping into death:
 Oh! stay for me, my heart is breaking fast.
 This is a depth of misery my brain will not support.
 Am I upon the verge of madness then?
 No, no, it is the giddiness of horror.

MARQ. DI R. A strange confusion — 'midst my wretched thoughts,

Doth call years past, back to my memory ;
And did I not believe, the grave long since had held
Agnes di Montalto, I'd call thee by that name.
But thou canst not be ———


BER. I am — you knew me once ; look on me now —
I did escape the grave ; I am that guilty wretch —
Who was the wife of thy once valu'd friend ;
The injur'd father of this blood stain'd ruin.
My brain ——— my brain ———
Give me some help to hold my beating brain.
Ha ! ———

Blood-fac'd murder doth thrust forth its shaggy head,
Stares full upon me, and doth tax *me*
With these horrors ———
Am I the guilty cause ? My madden'd brain,
And my discordant heart, both answer yes.
My guilt hath murder'd innocence and peace ;
And these fair May-day blossoms, are blushed
Deeply in the dye of their own blood —
And I the guilty cause — *My* sin hath brought
My noble son to perish in oblivion.

[*Voices chant in the distance.*

What sound is that ? Where am I ?
Still lingering in mortality — Can I forget ?
Never ———

The sun may roll upon the brink of earth :
And the great sea be drunk up by its fire ;
Distilling liquid flames throughout the world.
Then, in the general wreck of all things,
Might I cease to think upon my own sad fate.



A dreadful wonder would eat up the past :—
Yes, then I might forget awhile, before
The flood of life was swept into the gulf;
But then if reason bore my senses
Swimming to the last ;—
In that last struggle of poor sinking life,
The volume of the past would ope it's pond'rous page,
And be the register of my dying thoughts.
It stands before me now in blood — read — read.

BELT. Peace to thee, dear lady.

BER. Oh ! speak not to me, lest my raging brain,
Like a volcano bursting out with fire,
Should tempt me to some desp'rate dreadful act,
That shall outcope with these terrific sights.
I'm suffocated for the want of air —
Give me more air — space — space —
A wider space — I am confin'd for space
To vent my misery in —
Give me the whole expanse of the wild air,
Which uncontroll'd doth breathe in endless empire.

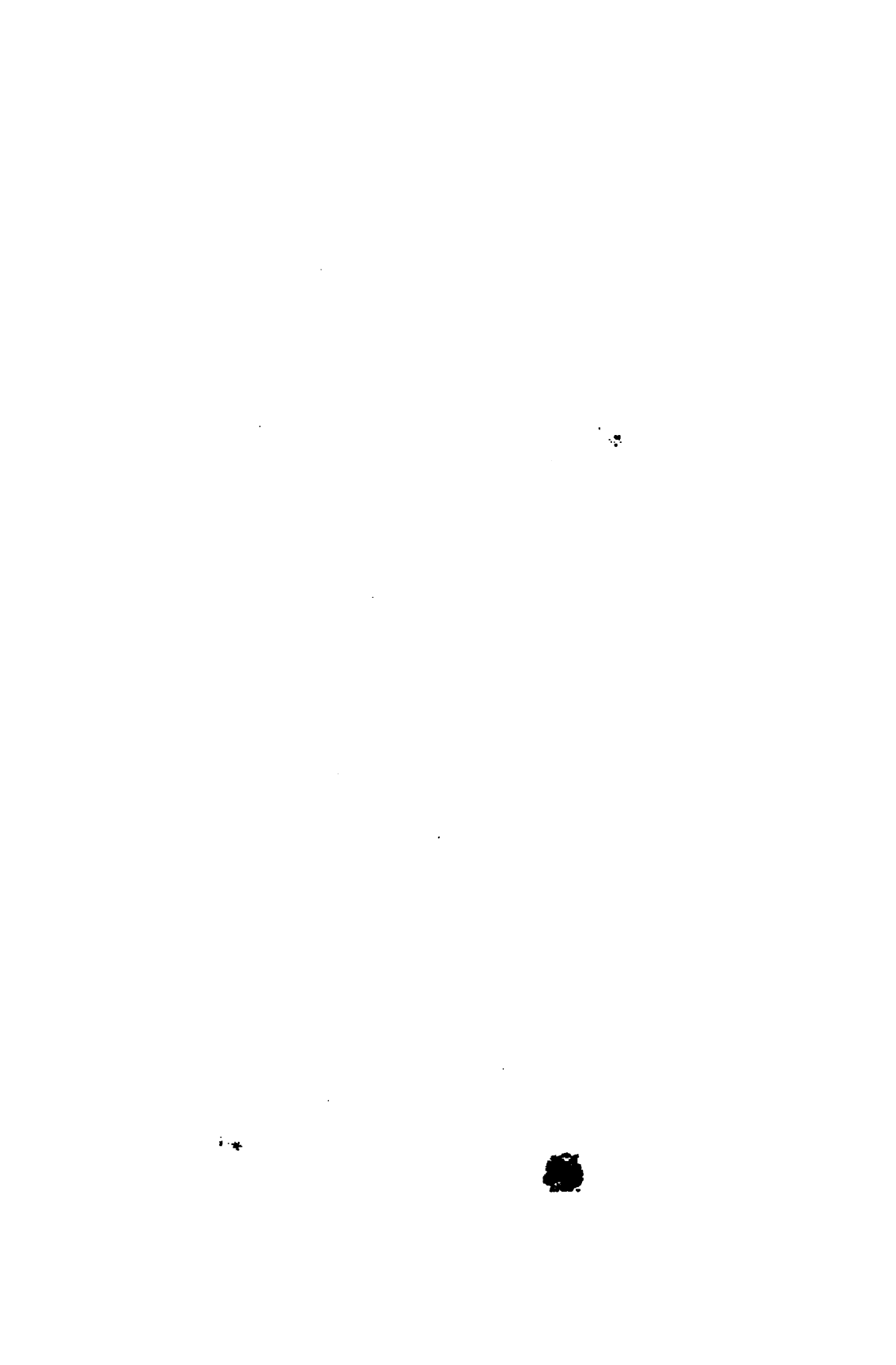
[*Chant of voices.*

Ah ! again — my heart — my heart — 'tis over —
The great struggle's over — [Dies.

[*Curtain falls. Voices chanting in the distance.*

THE END.





WHO COULD BELIEVE IT?

A

Comedy,

IN FIVE ACTS.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

Earl of RAVENSDALE.

Sir GEORGE DASHINGTON.

Mr. COURTNEY.

LAMBSLEY DASHINGTON, (*half-witted*) *Nephew*
to *Sir* George.

L'ESTRANGE.

CROSBY, *Butler to Lady* Dashington.

FOOTMAN.

Lady FLIGHT.

Lady DASHINGTON.

Miss DASHINGTON, }
ARABELLA, } *Daughters of Lady* Dashington.
GEORGIANA, }

SOPHIA DASHINGTON, *Niece to Sir* George.

ORCHARD, *Lady* Dashington's *Maid*.

STRANGER.

SERVANTS, &c.

SCENE—*LONDON*.

WHO COULD BELIEVE IT?

ACT I.

SCENE I. *A Drawing Room.*—LADY DASHINGTON, *her Daughters, and Mr. COURTNEY, sitting at a table, the young Ladies amusing themselves with books, &c. LAMBSLEY DASHINGTON sitting in front of the stage.*

LADY DASH. THEY say that patience is a virtue, and I am sure I must be largely stocked with it, for no human being could have supported such a trial with so much patience as I have; but now the time having arrived to end all anxiety, I hope I shall not be obliged to wait the caprice of another eccentric man: really, really, that would be past bearing. Heigho!

LAMBSLEY. (*very sorrowfully*) Heigho!

LADY DASH. (*rising in a passion*) How dare you echo my sigh?

LAMBSLEY. I did but sigh, it was my own.

LADY DASH. I tell you sir, it was my sigh which you echoed.

LAMBSLEY. A sigh is but a great breath, and my breath's not yours.

LADY DASH. If it was I'd smother it. Heigho!

LAMBSLEY. Heigho!

LADY DASH. There again; human endurance cannot last out with such an irritating half-witted brute.

MISS DASH. Never mind him, mamma, we shall shortly get rid of him.

LADY DASH. Yes my love, that's very true, but to bear with him until then, is almost out of my power. He's a constant pest; always doing something to annoy me. If by accident I gape, he begins too, and so loudly, and so terribly, that it is quite frightful, and depressing to the spirits to hear him. And if —

LAMBSLEY. Well I can't help it (*gaping*) you should not put me in mind of what's natural.

LADY DASH. No indeed, you are natural enough without.

LAMBSLEY. Now you see (*gaping very loud and stretching as he rises*) you have set me going.

LADY DASH. Well, well, I'll set you going very soon, to a livelier tune, I promise you.

MISS DASH. Really, mamma, I would not listen to him; he is too contemptible.

LADY DASH. Yes my dear, that's true; but he makes me so nervous by his impertinent cunning, that I am sometimes very thankful, I have never done him a mischief. How have I endeavoured to bear with him calmly through all my affliction! You know that whenever my tears were falling for our late loss, he constantly persecuted me, by his loud bellowing, enough to alarm the whole neighbourhood: while I have sat patiently with

my handkerchief to my eyes, in silent grief and a breaking heart, for the loss of my poor dear Sir James; until I could bear with him no longer. (*Puts her handkerchief to her eyes.*)

LAMBSLEY. (*bursting into a loud cry*) Oh! my poor dear uncle. Oh!

LADY DASH. Ah! your poor dear uncle little reflected, upon the torment he was inflicting upon his poor dear widow; or he never would have left her hampered with such a pest; in addition to her other affliction.

LAMBSLEY. He was a wise man, and did all for the best, or he never would have left me to be so buffeted about.

LADY DASH. He was a regular old goose.

LAMBSLEY. Yes that he was, for he always had me under his wing, when he was alive.

LADY DASH. I wish he had flown away with you under his wing, when he was departing this life.

LAMBSLEY. Oh but then he would have taken me into the pit hole with him.

LADY DASH. Yes, and then two of my troubles would have been buried at once; instead of having one of them lengthened out by his singular will. He was a strange man, God help him. But now, thank goodness, only a few hours remain, and then——

LAMBSLEY. You'll turn me out of your doors, I suppose.

LADY DASH. Yes, that will I, quick enough.

LAMBSLEY. And strip me of every thing, if you can.

LADY DASH. Yes, and strap you too, if you don't behave yourself quietly.

LAMBSLEY. Will you though? Do if you dare. I've

got another uncle coming, and he'll not let you beat and bang about his own skin, and bruise his poor flesh and blood, I'll be bound.

LADY DASH. If you dare to say another word, I'll certainly knock you down.

LAMBSLEY. I'll not stand that, I know. (*sitting down*) No, no, that would be a good joke.—It would be a good joke for me though; a great stroke of pelican: she has often given me two black eyes at once. [*Aside.*]

LADY DASH. I shall not be able to keep my hands off him much longer.

LAMBSLEY. If you come near me, I'll bite you; see if I don't. I will indeed now.

LADY DASH. Do you hear how he defies me?

MISS DASH. Oh pray don't strike him before Mr. Courtney; what will he think?

LAMBSLEY. (*in a threatening attitude*) I say if she touches me I'll bite her.

LADY DASH. Why the knave is surely bewitched; what ails him? Bite me indeed! would you dare to bite me, sirrah?

LAMBSLEY. Yes, that I would. I've often heard poor uncle call you a she dragon, and so you are; and if you begin to claw me, I'll bite you; see if I don't.

LADY DASH. Why, thou caliban rogue, was ever any thing equal to his assurance. I'll not bear this any longer, however. (*Darting at him and giving him a blow.*)

LAMBSLEY. I will, that I will; I'll bite her very nose off, if I can get hold of it.

MR. COURT. (*coming forward*) Upon my word, this is a very distressing scene to witness; and your ladyship must excuse me for interfering; but upon so very

serious a family meeting as the present, when the remaining wishes of its late lamented master are to be read over: I do think that a little forbearance would be very creditable.

LADY DASH. O very well sir, very well, Mr. Courtney. So, because a few bits of parchment and paper are to be read over; I am to put up with every indignity and insult; from a creature, who has been forced upon me, by my poor silly Sir James's ridiculous will. The idea of a man putting such a restraint upon one, for six months and a day, and ——

MR. COURT. Why really, my lady, I must say ——

Enter SOPHIA.

SOPHIA. Dear, dear aunt, what is the matter?

LAMBSLEY. What do you call her aunt for, Sophy? Aunt indeed; she's no aunt of yours or mine. I won't own her: aunt indeed; she's more like a great uncle.

LADY DASH. Very well sir, very well sir; you shall smart for this. I wonder you don't make him hold his tongue, Miss Sophia: but I suppose you have taught him this assurance.

SOPHIA. Indeed aunt ——

MISS DASH. He never would have dared to talk to mamma in that way, if Sophia had not.

ARABELLA. Why yes indeed; there is something in that, I do believe.

GEORGIANA. Nothing so likely, in my opinion.

SOPHIA. Indeed, indeed, you do me great injustice; for however much I may be suspected of the many unkindnesses laid to my charge; I am wholly innocent of

them: and all I can answer to these unjust suspicions is, that I have patiently endured every unkind attack, conscious of my own rectitude.

LADY DASH. Vastly fine indeed. This was the way you got your uncle to listen to you on all occasions; and to take part against every body else, ay even against his own wife.

MISS DASH. Yes, and against his own eldest child too. A pretty puritanical piece of business it was altogether: a pretty thing indeed for two beggarly relatives to get into a family, and cause such confusion; and entirely from my father's odd whims.

MR. COURT. Your father, Miss Dashington, was a just and good man; and I am both shocked and grieved to find, that the greatness of his benevolence, should reflect no bright ray upon the heart of his own child; to prevent her from calling to account, the conduct of so excellent a parent. His protection of these two orphans, under his own roof; considering the circumstances altogether, and the various feelings——

LADY DASH. Well, well, sir, we wish to have no comments upon family feelings, and family business, which no person has a right to interfere with. And I think it rather indelicate of you Mr. Courtney, (as a friend of the family too) to make these sort of remarks.

MR. COURT. I am the last man to take upon myself that, which I have no business to interfere in; but, my lady, you surely must feel, that something is due to the memory of an excellent man, and the kind friend of all who knew him; and while I have breath, I trust I shall never allow him to be degraded by unjust calumnies; without offering my humble voice to exalt and support his

name, by that justice, and that respect, which ought to blaze brightly over the ashes of departed worth.

LADY DASH. As to all this sort of thing, Mr. Courtney, it is not at all to the purpose. I believe you came here to-night concerning some papers, which are to be examined, according to the strange will of my poor late Sir James; and to make arrangements accordingly: for which you will get paid handsomely enough: and not to make a funeral oration upon his memory, and so forth, for which you will not get paid by me in the manner you would wish, I dare say; for I shall not use much ceremony when this matter is concluded; and then you will have to make a departing speech for yourself. But you were one of my poor silly Sir James's favorites; and I dare say, if the truth were known, you've feathered your nest pretty handsomely; and can very well afford to take these flights, with tolerable good security upon his account; without caring for having your feathers ruffled a bit now.

MR. COURT. My conduct through life, has, I believe, been pretty much guided in a straight forward path; and I have endeavoured to adhere to it under every circumstance; and its undeviating track, will, I trust, lead to a better reward, than all the basely feathered nests, which your ladyship alludes to.

LADY DASH. I have nothing to do with what your expectations are, sir. I am extremely exasperated at this impertinent being; and what could possess Sir James to clog me with him now, I cannot imagine.

SOPHIA. It always was to me a very great misfortune, the being made a subject of dispute, between your ladyship and my late dear uncle: and I have often en-

treated him to allow me to retire from his family, and thus remove the unpleasant feelings caused on my account.

LAMBSLEY. That's true enough, I'll be sworn. I've often heard Sophy say to poor uncle —

SOPHIA. Now pray be silent, Lambsley.

LAMBSLEY. Oh I dare say Sophy; I've stood it long enough: to be humbled and bumbled about as I have been; and after all she'll turn me out like a dog: but I shall be far better off if I have to beg. (*crying*) Ay; you may threaten, but I don't care for you a mouse's tail. I've got such a spirit upon me, that 'gad if she claws me again, I'll do her a mischief.

SOPHIA. Fie, fie, brother; I'm shocked to hear you talk so. You know you promised me, to do as I requested.

LAMBSLEY. Well so I did, Sophy.

MR. COURT. Come, come, allow me to make up differences. Little disputes will occur sometimes, and your ladyship must overlook anything Mr. Lambsley has said, which we all know he does not intend. Bear and forbear is the motto of a christian. And you, Mr. Lambsley, will make some apology, to convince your aunt, that you are sorry for having expressed yourself so violently.

LAMBSLEY. Indeed, I'll do no such a thing, Mr. Courtney. I've often heard poor uncle say, that you were a good man; and I like you, because he liked you: so for your sake, and Sophy's sake; I'll tell you what I'll do— if she'll beg my pardon for thumping me, and say she did not intend to harm me, why, I'll make friends with her this time.

LADY DASH. Why the insolent creature, I'll have him turned out this very night.

MR. COURT. I would advise your ladyship by no means to do that, because it would be injurious to your own interest. It must be recollected, that the will expressly forbids any alteration in the establishment, for six months and a day : that after twelve o'clock on the night of that day, the present Baronet is at liberty to examine the packet of papers, which are to guide the arrangement of your ladyship's large fortune ; and the restraint which you have hitherto been under, will then cease, and not till then. The time having arrived, it is the Baronet's wish, that the papers should be examined this very night, for which purpose we are now waiting his arrival. Your ladyship will to-morrow be able to act at pleasure. But should you not comply with these injunctions, the fortune goes to another branch of the family. This your ladyship must bear in mind.

LADY DASH. Why that's very true ; it would be a foolish piece of business to be deprived of one's right by acting contrary to the whims and fancies of my poor late Sir James, for the sake of a few hours. But to-morrow I can do as I like, and then I'll be mistress of my own house. You say the present Baronet is very agreeable.

MR. COURT. I think him so. But he is much altered since I last saw him, which is now twenty-five years ago : the very day he went abroad. And forgetting how many liberties time had taken with my own person, I certainly was not prepared to see so great a change in him. The studious habits he contracted while abroad, and his total seclusion from the world, have tended to alter him, more than almost any other circumstances would have done ; and have made him appear a much older man than he really is.

LADY DASH. What time is it ? It cannot be far off twelve.

MR. COURT. (*taking out his watch*) It is past twelve, my lady.

LADY DASH. Bless me, is it indeed ? and yet it must be. Do you really think the Baronet will arrive to-night ?

MR. COURT. I do, most decidedly. I believe your ladyship as well as myself, received his intimation on the subject, this very morning.

LADY DASH. Why yes.

MISS DASH. I think, mamma, we shall not be able to go to Lady Flight's ; for it is now past twelve : and my uncle is not yet arrived ; and when he comes, there is no knowing how we may be prevented from getting away. There is the reading of the packet of papers ; and he will expect us to talk with him, I suppose, and we could not leave him quite so soon, perhaps as we might wish.

LADY DASH. Oh but I promised her to go the moment we could get away ; if it was ever so late.

MISS DASH. Well, mamma, do as you like, but I think we had better give it up for to-night.

ARABELLA. Well so I think, but mamma will never be persuaded to listen to reason : I never saw any body like her.

LADY DASH. Now pray dont be impertinent, Arabella.

ARABELLA. Well you are always so obstinate, there's no making you do any thing right.

LADY DASH. Well, well.

LAMBSLEY. No, no, it's ill, ill. If I was but her own mother what a thumping I would give her for that.

ARABELLA. Take care you don't get one yourself, sir.

LAMBSLEY. Don't threaten me with your mother's great claws. You know I've beat you many a time, and I'll give you a good thumping now before I go, if you don't take care.

MISS DASH. You do not intend going, mamma, do you, to-night? You had better not.

LADY DASH. Very well, very well. Ring the bell, Matilda (*to Miss Dashington.*) I believe I ordered the carriage to wait, when we came from the opera.

MISS DASH. Ring the bell, Arabella.

ARABELLA. I shan't. (*sulkily.*)

SOPHIA. Allow me, aunt. (*running to the bell.*)

MISS DASH. (*scornfully*) An officious, artful thing.

Enter FOOTMAN.

LADY DASH. Tell the coachman, I shall not want the carriage again to-night.

FOOTMAN. Very well, my lady. [*Exit.*]

LADY DASH. I think we had better take some refreshment: I am quite wearied with waiting in this suspense. Mr. Courtney, will you accompany us. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. *A Room.*

Enter LAMBSLEY.

LAMBSLEY. Where's Crosby, I wonder?

Enter CROSBY.

Oh Crosby, I've just slipt away for a minute or two to

tell you, that she's threatened to turn me out to-morrow.

CROSBY. Come, come, cheer up Mr. Lambsley, something will turn out better than you expect after all.

LAMBSLEY. Dear heart! to think of poor uncle leaving her to do as she likes; but he did it for the best, I'm sure he did, Crosby.

CROSBY. No doubt, no doubt; and perhaps when her ladyship comes to reflect a bit; why there's no knowing what she may do that's right and proper. She was once kind-hearted enough, and may take to it again: who knows? it's a long lane that has never a turning; as the saying is.

LAMBSLEY. Ay, but it's a lane she'll go through without turning, except to turn me out. Oh dear! oh dear! what is to become of me? and poor Sophy too?

CROSBY. Well, well, Mr. Lambsley; your uncle's coming, and he will be sure to do what is right for you: he has neither chick nor child; as the saying is, and it would be very hard to let his own nephew and niece be unprotected, when he must have more than he knows what to do with. Besides, I remember when he was a boy, he was as generous as a prince; but to be sure, that's a long time ago; for I was then a boy myself.

LAMBSLEY. Well, but he never saw me in his life; and there's no knowing, he may'nt like me so well as poor dear uncle did: but he'll have a fine stone heart, if he does'nt like Sophy.

CROSBY. Well, Mr. Lambsley; I have been, man and boy, as the saying is, in this family, these sixty-five years, and —

LAMBSLEY. Have you though? Why bless me, I didn't know it was so long as that. Let me see — units, tens

hundreds — no, units, tens — that's it; why then — twice ten is twenty — that's one twenty, then ten and ten, — that's another twenty; and then another — that'll be three twenties — and five split into three: let me see now — why then you've been amongst us, three times my age, and a fraction.

CROSBY. Well but, Mr. Lambsley, one good turn deserves another; as the saying is. I've been clothed and fed, and have received wages from father and son, these sixty-five years, and nobody can say that I ever wronged my master of a farthing; and that's something to say, now a days. I've been a faithful servant, I hope, and a careful man, and have laid up my honest gains: and if the worst comes to the worst, Mr. Lambsley, (*much affected*) why if you and Miss Sophia, dear young lady, will put up with my humble means, until something better turns out — it will only be taking back what you both have a right to.

LAMBSLEY. You were always my friend, Crosby, but this is more than we ever could expect. (*bursting into tears*) How poor uncle would love you if he knew it.

Enter ORCHARD, unperceived.

ORCHARD. [*Aside.*] Now what's all this about, I wonder? This old fool, and this great fool, are always conjuring together; but we shall be rid of them both soon, I'll warrant me. I dare say they are talking against me.

LAMBSLEY. Well, one real friend (*turns and sees Orchard.*) Ah! there now, who could believe it? She's listening again, I do declare. You ought to be ashamed

of yourself, you ought: but remember Mrs. Orchard, listeners never hear any good of themselves.

ORCHARD. No I dare say not; and if the truth were known, I'll be bound I've had my share between you within these few minutes past. People can never be talking any good, when they hold their tongues, the moment other people appear.

CROSBY. Indeed, Mrs. Orchard, we were not thinking about you. Mr. Lambsley was talking of, and to a friend, I hope, and therefore —

LAMBSLEY. He means that you're no friend of mine.

ORCHARD. Oh dear! bless me! Mr. Crosby; that's meant for a sharp cut I suppose: ha! ha! ha! As if I cared.—[*Aside.*] An impudent old Saracen; how I hate him!

CROSBY. Well as you say,—

ORCHARD. Well, as I say, I always speak my mind; I don't carry two faces, like some folks.

LAMBSLEY. But you carry one very bold one, which is quite enough for two — ay for two dozen.

ORCHARD. A fool's bolt is soon shot; as the saying is. Eh Mr. Crosby? as the saying is, you know; ha! ha! ha!

[*Exit.*]

CROSBY. That's the most impudent woman, I ever met with in my life, long as I've lived in service, and much as I've seen, and old as I am: but one's never too old to learn, as the sayi—n— I'll not say that again, however. I wonder how my lady puts up with her.

Reenter ORCHARD.

ORCHARD. There's Miss Sophia looking all over the house for you: she wants you, Mr. Lambsley.

LAMBSLEY. Then I shall not go, Mrs. Orchard, for it's only you that want me gone ; that's all. I know your tricks well enough. Does'nt she, Crosby ?

CROSBY. I would not answer, for what Mrs. Orchard thinks, or does, or wants.

ORCHARD. Well then, I'll tell you' what I want ; I want two bottles of port wine.

CROSBY. What for ?

ORCHARD. That's no business of yours, Mr. Crosby. My lady told me to ask you for them.

LAMBSLEY. Don't give her a drop, you know she has often served you that trick before.

ORCHARD. And pray what business have you to interfere, sir ? I should like to know ? Do you intend to give me the wine, or not ?

CROSBY. Why really, I must first know —

ORCHARD. Oh very well ! it's nothing to me : I shall tell my lady you would not obey her orders.

[*Exit.*

CROSBY. If my lady should have desired her to ask for it, I am afraid she will get you into some scrape, Mr. Lambsley ; she's very artful.

LAMBSLEY. I know by the way of her, it's no such a thing : did not you see how she wanted to get rid of me ? She knows how cunning I am. I'll go and find it out now, that I will.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I. *A Conservatory.* LADY DASHINGTON,
the YOUNG LADIES, and MR. COURTNEY,
discovered at a table of refreshments.

LADY DASH. I should think, Mr. Courtney, there would be no great harm, as the time has now arrived, just to look over the papers ; for it really is so very tiresome, waiting in this way.

MR. COURT. I should be most happy to oblige you, my lady ; but there is a seal upon the papers, which the Baronet is himself to break ; and in your ladyship's presence : therefore, as in all human probability, he will be here himself shortly ; the thing is quite impossible.

Enter LAMBSLEY and SOPHIA.

LADY DASH. Why truly I had forgotten the seal. The idea of poor Sir James, leaving a few papers sealed up ; containing as the will acknowledges, a few of his singular wishes, which have now to be fulfilled ; and which his brother, forsooth, is obliged to open. As if, like any rational person, he could not have had all put together, and have let one fuss do for all. I hope, however, I am not to be troubled with this dreadful pest, any longer ; by his foolish afterthoughts. I don't know how I could forget that odious seal.

LAMBSLEY. I wish you would not forget yourself so often, and do what you ought not to do ; and meddle with what you have no business with. You are no skin

of mine. and I'm no skin of yours; only in law and parchment.

LADY DASH. No, that I'm sure of; thou obstinate mule.

LAMBSLEY. Now see what I'll do, if she calls me any more names.

SOPHIA. Oh pray be silent Lambsley. You distress me very much by your rash conduct.

LAMBSLEY. Very well, what does she call me names for? Mule indeed! Mule! why mule's a donkey. Am I like a donkey pray? She has pulled my ears until they are nearly long enough for one. But I've got such a spirit upon me, (*taking up a chair*) that you shall see what I'll do desperate, if she calls me any more names.

MISS DASH. I hope your ladyship will not degrade yourself any further: pray don't mind what he says.

ARABELLA. I wonder you should not consider your own consequence more.

GEORGINA. Oh do not touch him again: pray mamma.

[*All three holding her back.*]

MR. COURT. Indeed, your ladyship, I would advise you not to take any further notice. Mr. Lambsley is not exactly aware of what he does: and I am sure he has no meaning for what he says.

LAMBSLEY. Hav'nt I though? indeed but I have. I'm as insane as any body, and they can't persuade me out of that, with all their sense and nonsense.

Enter ORCHARD in great alarm.

ORCHARD. Oh my lady! my lady!

LADY DASH. What is the matter, Orchard?

ORCHARD. Oh my lady! my lady!

LADY DASH. Why don't you tell me?

ORCHARD. Oh my lady! my lady! I was in the house-keeper's room, and a great knock came: oh such a knock! So I heard John and William go to the hall; and oh my lady! my lady!

LADY DASH. What is the matter woman? I command you to tell me.

ORCHARD. Well my lady, well. Oh my poor heart! and so back they came flying, and the porter too; and after them came (*turns fearfully round*) oh here he is again.

[*Screams, and runs behind Lady Dashington.*

A body of servants rush in screaming, and a short pause ensues.

LADY DASH. What can be the meaning of all this?

Enter slowly SIR GEORGE DASHINGTON, a tall thin pale old gentleman, with long grey hair, and a hat and cane in his hand. LADY DASHINGTON screams and faints: the young ladies fly in all directions, to get out with the servants at an opposite door. LAMBSLEY falls flat upon his face; and SOPHIA remains trembling.

SIR GEORGE. This is a very agreeable sort of welcome, after so long an absence from my country and relatives. Ah! my worthy friend, you can perhaps explain the mystery. (*shaking hands with Mr. Courtney*) I did not expect that my presence would have created so much alarm, I must confess, or I should, I believe, have remained where I was, shut up from the world. I did

anticipate a different reception in my own brother's family: even the servants seem, as if by instinct, to be terrified at sight of me. What means all this?

MR. COURT. Why the effect produced by your presence, is serious indeed Sir George: but I can easily account for it: from the extreme likeness between your late lamented brother and yourself; which was always from childhood so remarkably striking. Indeed, seeing you now Sir George, in the very house, the very spot where I have so often and so lately seen him, the wonderful resemblance is almost incredible; and this surely has had the serious effect produced on all. I should certainly have been somewhat staggered myself, had I not seen you previously.

SIR GEORGE. Ah! well, perhaps so; I never thought of that. I should be induced to smile; if the subject of the mistake and the effect were not of too serious a nature.

MR. COURT. Allow me, Sir George, to present to you, your niece Sophia.

[Taking her by the hand, and leading her to her uncle.]

SIR GEORGE. Ah! my brother Philip's daughter. Welcome, welcome, dear Sophia. (*embraces her affectionately*) You will find as kind a friend in me I hope, as you did in my late brother.

SOPHIA. Your unexpected kindness sir, is so great, that it quite overpowers me. (*much affected*) You must forgive me if I cannot express at this moment, all that my heart feels — but —

SIR GEORGE. Yes, yes; I know you are a grateful good girl; my poor brother has often told me so. You

are very like what your mother was at your age, Sophia. Where is your brother?

MR. COURT. (*going to Lambsley, and pulling him by the arm*) Mr. Lambsley; here is your uncle.

LAMBSLEY. I know it, (*groaning*) I know it, I've seen it, I know it.

MR. COURT. Well but sir, don't you intend to pay your respects to him? and come and speak to him?

LAMBSLEY. Oh! I respect it too much to speak to it. Oh! that ever I should see such a thing. Oh!

MR. COURT. But you are labouring under a mistake, Mr. Lambsley.

LAMBSLEY. Oh! there is no mistaking him — Oh! that ever I should see such a thing.

MR. COURT. Come, Mr. Lambsley, rise again; and all will be explained in a moment.

LAMBSLEY. My poor uncle has risen again, and I can't. Oh! that ever I should see such a thing.

MR. COURT. But you mistake, Mr. Lambsley; it is not as you suppose. It is your uncle Sir George, whose likeness to your late uncle has created all this unnecessary fear,

LAMBSLEY. (*peeping up*) Is it Mr. Courtney? But who could believe it? Oh sir, thank you sir, thank you Mr. Courtney. You've relieved me from a weight, that was like a tombstone upon me. Bless me, I hardly knew where I was. Only feel my hand sir; it's like a marble slab: and as to my heart sir, I think it's gone; I don't think I've got such a thing in my body. (*slowly rising, and looking cautiously towards Sir George*) Oh dear! dear! it's quite awful to look upon him.

SIR GEORGE. Come nephew, (*Lambsley starts at*

hearing his voice) won't you shake hands with me. I am sorry for having caused all this unnecessary alarm; but my likeness to my brother, will I hope, when we are better acquainted, ensure me some place in your affection.

LAMBSLEY. (*Half assured, and giving his hand at arm's length*) Why you are deadly like poor uncle, that's a plain truth. Oh! dear! I can hardly think—and yet—yes I believe all's right (*trembling*) oh yes! I feel I've got a heart now: it beats like a mallet upon my ribs; and instead of being cold, I'm just now as if I'd been dipt from the crown of my head to the tip of my toes in a boiling copper. It's from the little fright I've been in, I dare say.

SIR GEORGE. Yes, yes, no doubt. But you must try to get over this foolish feeling, and act with the spirit of a man.

LAMBSLEY. Why I took you for the spirit of a man; and that's the truth. Why, bless me, you are so like my poor uncle, that I feel as if he was alive again. I loved him very dearly: (*wiping his eyes*) I don't think I shall ever love you so well, I think I can't, and that's the truth. But you must not be offended; don't be offended.

SIR GEORGE. Not in the least. I am yet as but a stranger; and another thing, you were under some obligations to my brother.

LAMBSLEY. Yes—poor dear uncle. (*crying loudly; which seems to arouse Lady Dashington, who groans*) Bless me! who is that? (*starting, and turning round*) oh! its only the old one.

MR. COURT. Dear! dear! I had forgotten her lady-

ship. (*going with Sophia to Lady Dashington, and endeavouring to recover her*)

SIR GEORGE. Is that Lady Dashington ; my sister-in-law?

LAMBSLEY. Yes, that's her ; you must take her as you find her.

SIR GEORGE. And where are my three nieces ?

LAMBSLEY. Oh I don't know : they were here when you came in, uncle ; but what's come of them is all a mystery to me.

SIR GEORGE. Had you not better go and see where they are, and relieve them from their unnecessary fears ; it would be but kind.

LAMBSLEY. Why I would, uncle, with all my heart, if I had the heart to do it with ; but I don't feel quite myself, just yet awhile. Dear me ! they may be in the cellar for ought I know, or up some chimney. I dare say they thought poor uncle was come to call them over the coals ; like enough too.

MR. COURT. Indeed your ladyship it is all a mistake.

SOPHIA. Pray compose yourself aunt, it is my uncle George

SIR GEORGE. Yes : come Lady Dashington, (*taking her hand*) I am your brother George Dashington. I am truly sorry that I should have created so much pain.

[*Lady Dashington opens her eyes, and fixing them for a moment wildly on Sir George, screams, and relapses.*]

SIR GEORGE. I had better retire for a short time. I'll just step this way for a few minutes ; and when she is herself again ; (*to Mr. Courtney*) you can let me know : (*goes to the door, and enters. A violent screaming is heard,*

and the noise of things falling about; which again arouses Lady Dashington.)

LAMBSLEY. (*Going to Lady Dashington, and examining her face.*) Yes I do think she's not make believe now; it's all real as it ought to be. Now this is something like. Well I should have thought she could have faced the naughty man himself, for my part; and would have crushed a poor ghost to a mummy in no time, with a pinch of her thumb and finger. But there's no telling what people are in reality, till they are tried. (*Lady Dashington opens her eyes again, and fixes them on Lambsley*) I say this is me, you know me; don't be frightened now: come, shake hands, and let's be friends. You need not be frightened at me. (*takes her hand*) I'm Lambsley—myself; you know me.

LADY DASH. (*faintly*) Yes I know you Lambsley, and I know too well the face I gazed upon just now. (*shuddering*) Where can I rest my confused brain? Surely I've been in a delirium; and yet, no, no, the certainty bewilders me. (*starting up, and gazing around fearfully*) Where am I?

MR. COURT. Pray hear me for one moment, my lady.

LADY DASH. (*still looking wildly round*) I could not be deceived; surely my senses are wavering.

SOPHIA. Pray listen aunt, only for one moment.

MR. COURT. Your ladyship has been alarmed, by the likeness which always existed between the two brothers. It was your ladyship's brother in law, whom you saw, just now; who has arrived as we expected.

LADY DASH. George Dashington, whom I saw? (*much confused*) George? —

SOPHIA. Yes, aunt; my uncle George, who is so like

my dear late uncle, that when I first beheld him, as he entered, I cannot describe, nor indeed scarcely believe, what my own feelings were.

LAMBSLEY. Why to be sure, it was uncle George ; I soon found that out, bless you. Why the thing is, you see you take things so hastily always. But this will be a lesson to you ; and so it ought : for as poor uncle used to say, we should behave ourselves, for nothing's certain on this side the ——

SOPHIA. (*putting her hand before Lambsley's mouth*)
Do be quiet Lambsley.

LAMBSLEY. Oh very well ; but remember, a friend in need, is a friend indeed. And poor uncle would ——

LADY DASH. Shall I never be rid of this dreadful clog ? Nothing will stop his tongue.

LAMBSLEY. Nor yours neither, I think.

LADY DASH. Begone, brute.

LAMBSLEY. She's beginning again, I do declare : but uncle's come, remember : I only just give you warning ; and a good soul he seems too : very like poor uncle. I'll tell him of all your tricks, see if I don't, when you least expect it.

Reenter SIR GEORGE DASHINGTON.

SIR GEORGE. Mr. Courtney, pray be good enough to step hither. All that I can say, does but make bad, a great deal worse. Do pray endeavour to explain away this most extraordinary, and unfortunate prepossession, as soon as possible. It becomes really alarming.

MR. COURT. Sir George, her ladyship is quite herself again.

SIR GEORGE. I sincerely lament the agitation I have caused your ladyship, (*Lady Dashington starts again*) and in so unexpected a way too. But I trust my resemblance to one so dear, will not prove a barrier to that interest, which I hope to possess in the hearts of my nearest relatives.

LADY DASH. Have you seen my daughters, Sir George?

SIR GEORGE. (*with some mortification*) Why I have I believe seen them, and that is all. They were in such a state of terror, that I forbore any further attempts, to bring them to a rational hearing.

LADY DASH. Poor things, they are not accustomed to be thwarted, or contradicted, or subjected to terrors of any kind. And I have no doubt, but that this unfortunate mistake, will lie with a heavy hand upon their spirits, poor things.

LAMBSLEY. A horsewhip laid over them, with a heavy hand, would take a good deal of the evil spirit out of them; and bring them to their senses, sooner than any thing else. A trumpery, saucy, conceited set of things.

Reenter MR. COURTNEY.

MR. COURT. I am sorry, Sir George, to have returned with so little success; but I hope you will be kind enough to accept the young ladies' excuses, for to-night. They begged me to say, that they will not be able to pay their respects to you, until the morning: and they are, I believe, about to retire to rest.

SIR GEORGE. I beg they may not be put to any further inconvenience on my account. I think however,

some attention to their father's own brother, might have been expected; and to their mother too, whom they left in a state of insensibility.

LADY DASH. Oh they don't mind me, Sir George.

SIR GEORGE. More shame for them, my lady. But whose fault is that? Not their's I fear.

LAMBSLEY. Why her own fault to be sure. She brings them up to peck her very eyes out; and shews them how to treat her, by the way she treats other people.

LADY DASH. You are making the most of your time, sir; but we shall see to-morrow, who will have most reason to be sorry for bad behaviour. I am not in a state now, to contend with you.

LAMBSLEY. Ah! poor uncle thought you'd behave yourself when he was gone, or he would not have left you to do as you like. Why, do you know, uncle, she's been to the opera this very night: (*Sir George starts*) ay, dressed as you see her, like a young married lady, instead of an old widow lady, as she is.

SIR GEORGE. (*in amazement*) To the opera, to-night?

LAMBSLEY. Yes, to be sure she has; and what's more, she was going to that Lady Flighty's, to spend the remainder of the night; only cousins thought it better not, because of your coming, and would not let her go.

SIR GEORGE. Surprising want of feeling indeed! Is this true? (*to Lady Dashington.*)

LADY DASH. It is, Sir George, I am above disguising the truth.

[*Yawning as she speaks; Lambsley yawning very loud also.*]

SIR GEORGE. (*staring at both in astonishment, first*

on one side then on the other) A most striking picture of family discord indeed! [*Aside.* I hope my nieces were not with you, my lady, considering my brother's recent death.

LAMBSLEY. Indeed but they were though, and quite as fine as she herself; no not quite so fine neither, for she always out-tops every body.

SIR GEORGE. (*sorrowfully*) I must say, I did not expect to see her ladyship, in such a habit as this, to-night.

LAMBSLEY. Why bless you, it's her habit to dress so, I tell you. Oh she's nothing now, to what she was last night; when they went to the Ambassador's, and the night before — let me see — oh no, I did not see her the night before; I forgot myself, for I always get out of the way, when she kicks up her grand routs at home.

SIR GEORGE. What public parties in the house already! What must the world think of all this?

LAMBSLEY. Yes, and out of the house too. I say, uncle, what do you think of her giving a water party, just two months after the news of poor uncle's being drowned? To change the scene, and do her good, she said. I wonder she did not expect to see poor uncle's head pop up, from among the fishes. And they are out every night, ay night after night, and nearly all night too; rolling about, from one place to another.

SIR GEORGE. Surprising indeed! And do you, Sophia, join in these extraordinary gaieties? (*Sophia is silent*) And so soon too, after the death of your poor uncle?

LAMBSLEY. What Sophy? Law bless you, not she. She always stops at home to comfort me; don't you. Sophy?

SIR GEORGE. What does the world say to all this, I ask? Surely your ladyship should consider appearances a little, for the sake of your children. Only imagine what an example, what a career, for three young creatures, just come out into life, budding forth upon the wild soil of dissipation; and under the sanction of a mother too: the tender stem, from whose support, their beauties should expand, and form a wreath of virtue, and of love; to shade her in return, when withering time, shall perish her own bloom; and frosty age, bedew her drooping head. Oh Lady Dashington! you know not what you are doing, what you are destroying, and what you are preparing for yourself. Let me conjure you, to listen to a brother's advice; the brother of your children's father; to take heed in time. One cautious step, may save us from a gulf. Take heed in time, I say.

LADY DASH. (*much confused*) This is a night of nights, indeed. My spirits will last out no longer; I think — I — I really must retire. It's getting late, and I am quite exhausted. I must see what rest will do, to restore my shattered nerves. I must now say good night—
[*going.*]

MR. COURT. I am sorry my lady, to remind you, that a painful duty yet remains; which is unavoidable. (*presenting a sealed packet to Sir George*) I am compelled to deliver this to Sir George, in the presence of your ladyship.

[*Sir George lingers over the packet, and then breaks the seal. Lady Dashington draws near, in breathless curiosity: Sir George reads one of the papers, and closes the packet again.*]

LADY DASH. What are the contents, Sir George?

SIR GEORGE. In this paper, a further and impressive request, that, as your ladyship is left the sole possessor of my brother's extensive personal property; I should see an immediate settlement made of fortunes for my three nieces; which he has left to your own discretion: and that a suitable and liberal provision, should be made at the same time, for Lambsley and Sophia. There are more papers here, which must be examined, as my brother's will directs, within four-and-twenty hours after the seal has been broken: and to-morrow therefore, Mr. Courtney, we will go through them, if you please; in the presence of her ladyship: and then we can make other arrangements. The very unpleasant occurrences of to-night, would render any further investigation distressing. Will it be convenient to your ladyship, at three o'clock to-morrow?

LADY DASH. To-morrow —— let me see —— Why I think it would be as well, just to go through the papers to-night, Sir George.

SIR GEORGE. I think quite otherwise.——We will say three o'clock, if convenient; or later, if your ladyship pleases.

LADY DASH. Oh sooner, I should say, Sir George.

SIR GEORGE. No, my lady, not sooner, if you please; for many reasons.

LADY DASH. Very well, Sir George; then now good night. Mr. Courtney, the same to you.

[*Exit, without noticing Lambsley and Sophia.*]

SIR GEORGE. [*Looking after her, and shaking his head sorrowfully*] Thoughtless, vain woman! how unfit to be a mother! Foolish, misguided mortal!——

LAMBSLEY. I'm mortal glad she's not my mother.

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I. LADY DASHINGTON'S *Boudoir*.

LADY DASH. Orchard!

ORCHARD. Yes, my lady. (*loitering*)

LADY DASH. Orchard!

ORCHARD. Yes my lady, I'm coming I say.

LADY DASH. Then why don't you come, directly I call?

ORCHARD. Because I'm coming as soon as I can. Well, my lady?

LADY DASH. Orchard, you had better step down, and wait until that French gentleman comes. He intends, I believe, to call this morning, in hopes I may give him an order, in his way of business.

ORCHARD. It's no business of mine, but I think your ladyship had better give him an order not to come again; for nobody seems to know what he comes for.

LADY DASH. And have I not desired you to say, that he comes with smuggled lace?

ORCHARD. Well, and so I have; but law a mercy, they don't believe that, for old John Crosby, the butler, laughs right out in my face, and tells me I'm a good one, at smuggling a lie. As I say, it's not very pleasant to be made a laughing stock, and a liar too, for other people's secrets: but if I knew, and your ladyship would tell me

the truth, why then I could use my own discretion, and stop all tongues at once.

LADY DASH. You had better begin by stopping your own, or you will not stop long in this house, I promise you. Old Crosby, eh? an insolent old rogue! And pray what else does he say?

ORCHARD. Oh plenty, my lady. But when one's told to hold one's tongue, one should not say any more.

LADY DASH. Yes, my good Orchard, but when serious liberties are taken, and one has one faithful creature about one, it is quite another thing.

ORCHARD. She'd tear my very eyes out, if she wasn't afraid of something; but I'll find her out, with all her cunning. (*Aside*) No, my lady, as I say, a still tongue makes a wise head; that's my way.

LADY DASH. And an excellent way too, Orchard: but when it becomes your duty to discover what ought to be known, it is quite another thing.

ORCHARD. Yes, I know that, my lady.

LADY DASH. Well then, what did he say?

ORCHARD. Why, he's not very particular, and that's the truth.

LADY DASH. Then it seems he takes very particular liberties with my name.

ORCHARD. Why, as to that, he has given your ladyship a name, after his own fashion.

LADY DASH. What! has it come to that? Does he dare to call me by any other, than my own proper name?

ORCHARD. Why, I suppose he dares to think it, the more proper name of the two.—[*Aside.* I'll do his business, an impudent old rascal! I'll get him turned out, please the pigs; for he's always watching and sneaking

about, and one can't say, nor do any thing, but he's sure to snap one's head off.

LADY DASH. I'm all in amazement. But pray let me know what he calls me?

ORCHARD. It will only vex you, my lady.

LADY DASH. Now pray tell me at once.

ORCHARD. Well, I wish I had not said any thing, but I thought it my duty: for as I say, although it's but a short word, it's a bad one, to speak so plainly, and a bad one too, to be in the mouths of people's own servants; for he has taught them all to say it, as pat as you please. I'm sure I quite cry sometimes, to think that the oldest servant in the house should behave so; and one that's been in the family so long too; even before your ladyship was your ladyship. And as I say, it's quite unbearable, to learn them such ways.

LADY DASH. (*Starting up in a passion*) Will the creature tell me at once?

ORCHARD. Oh dear! dear! don't make me jump out of my skin then. Law a mercy, how you make me jump! my heart's almost in my mouth, I do declare. I can hardly speak.

LADY DASH. (*Seizing her by the arm, and shaking her violently*) I'll help you to speak loud enough, if you do not tell me this instant.

ORCHARD. Oh law a mercy! Well then, if you will have it, he calls you — (*speaking close in Lady Dashington's face*) an old fool —

LADY DASH. Does he? (*pushing her away.*) He shall march.

ORCHARD. Well to be sure, (*crying*) as I say, it's well to become great, to be able to knock about any poor

creature, that happens to come in the way, and can't help herself. Oh dear me!

LADY DASH. Go this instant, and tell him to come to me. I'll soon convince him, that I am not such an old fool, as to put up with his assurance, at all events.

ORCHARD. Oh, my lady! you're not going to mention my name, I hope. I wouldn't have it known, that I'd been telling your ladyship: but only I could not hear your ladyship so abused. Ay, I'll never tell again what I hear; to be brought into trouble in this way. As I say, this is always what one gets, for doing what nobody else would, (*crying*) and meddling with what one has no business with.

LADY DASH. Well, well, you shall not get into trouble. I promise you not to mention your name.

ORCHARD. Thank you, my lady, thank you: I am sure I could not stand by, and hear your ladyship so *misrepresented*. As if, forsooth, your ladyship hadn't a right to have whoever your ladyship chooses, without so much as a thought about it, from such as us. And as I say—

LADY DASH. Well, well, Orchard, do as I desire you. And you may tell the porter that I am out to every body, but Lady Flight.

ORCHARD. Yes, my lady. Then won't your ladyship see the Frenchman, with his lace, when he comes? (*looking archly at Lady Dashington*)

LADY DASH. Most certainly I shall. Did I not tell you, to go and wait for him; and to tell Crosby to come to me?

ORCHARD. Oh dear me! yes; I beg your ladyship's pardon, I'd quite forgot.—(*Aside.*) I've done for the old rascal.

[*Exit.*]

LADY DASH. Plague take that chattering old fool. That's the worst of having people about one so long. Old servants in the family indeed! Old parrots in the family; who take care to learn all they can to chatter about. I've no doubt but that this old rogue, has entertained all the servants often enough, with my birth, parentage, and education: for he is pretty well acquainted with circumstances, which I am not very proud of, I must confess.—To be compelled thus, to put up with such insolence, because one's mouth is stopped by circumstances; how galling!—An old fool indeed. How little people imagine they are watched so closely by their servants!

Enter CROSBY.

CROSBY. Does your ladyship want me?

LADY DASH. (*turning round*) Why yes, Crosby.—I intend having a total alteration in my establishment; and I wish to tell you, that you must prepare for leaving.

CROSBY. Leaving, my lady?

LADY DASH. Yes, Crosby, yes. It was all very well, when poor Sir James was alive; but now things will be very different; and as Sir James has left me to use my own discretion, with regard to the legacies, why I will give you a handsome present, and then you must get another situation.

CROSBY. Another situation, my lady? Why I've grown so old in the service, that I did hope——(*much affected.*)

LADY DASH. Why really, Crosby, that's the very thing. You know you are completely one of the old school.

CROSBY. Well, my lady, whatever school I belonged to, I learnt to study my duty as an honest man: and the lessons which I learnt in my youth, have continued to guide me — until grown old in faithful service, I must now learn to bear the present distressing intelligence, with as much fortitude as I can. But my late dear master always promised me —

LADY DASH. Oh as to that — what dead people have promised, is nothing to me. You did well enough for poor Sir James, because, any body, who had wit enough to talk him over, — why he cared for little else. But, as this day puts me in full possession of my fortune, in every way, I intend making immediate arrangements —

CROSBY. But if your ladyship will —

LADY DASH. I've made up my mind, Crosby, and as I told you before, you will not suit me: you are one of the old school.

CROSBY. Well, my lady, whatever school I belonged to, nobody can say that I ever belonged to a charity school.

LADY DASH. Upon my word, this is a home cut indeed! (*aside*) I promise you, sir, I am not such an old fool, as you are pleased to take me for: and let me tell you —

Enter FOOTMAN, followed by ORCHARD.

FOOTMAN. The Frenchman is come, my lady.

LADY DASH. Oh! very well, I'll see him.

[Exit Footman.]

ORCHARD. Shall I bring the things up now, which were sent for your ladyship to look at?

LADY DASH. No, most certainly, not now. Don't you know, how I am going to be engaged?

ORCHARD. Why not exactly, but I soon will, I'll warrant me. [*Aside.*]

Enter FOOTMAN, followed by L'ESTRANGE.

FOOTMAN. (*contemptuously*) 'The French person, my lady. [*Exit.*]

L'ESTRANGE. (*Bowing*) *Bon jour, me ladesheep.*

LADY DASH. Ah! *boun jour, Moseer!*

L'ESTRANGE. I am in very much hope, *que vous vous portez bien.*

LADY DASH. Are you, sir? I am glad of it. — What does he mean I wonder? I shall expose my ignorance, before this saucy woman. (*Aside.*) You may go, Orchard; I don't want you at present.

ORCHARD. (*going*) I dare say you don't. Much hope, eh! and charming, he said as plain as any thing I ever heard. Well, come; that's pretty well for a smuggler. But I'll find her out. She thinks I don't understand. [*Aside.*]

[*Exit.*]

LADY DASH. I am afraid I have not got on with my lesson, for I really have been so engaged: but I am anxious to make great progress, and as quickly too, as I can; for I am constantly at a loss for a little French. It's a thing, now, one cannot do without, and it is so long since I was in practice, that you must take all the pains you can, if you please.

L'ESTRANGE. Ah, *oui*, me ladesheep, wid all I can.

LADY DASH. (*fetching a book from a table, and*

turning over the leaves,) Let me see, I think we begin here. Yes, here it is.

LAMBSLEY *creeps in.*

LAMBSLEY. (*Aside*) I'll know what he wants here, however. [*Hides himself.*]

LADY DASH. I'll just secure the door, in case of interruption. You'll keep my secret, I hope; and if any of the servants should ask questions, you can pretend not to understand them.

L'ESTRANGE. *Oh ! sur mon honneur, me lady.*

LADY DASH. Take a seat. (*pointing to a chair.*
L'Estrange gives her one, and takes one himself: they sit down in front of the stage.

L'ESTRANGE. *Ma belle ange.* My dear angel. *Mon amour.* My love.

LAMBSLEY. (*Aside*) Oh the old sinner! There's for you now. Well, who could believe it?

L'ESTRANGE. *Je vous aime beaucoup.* I love you very much. *Ecoutez moi, un moment.* Listen to me, but a moment. *Je vous aime, de plus en plus, chaque instant.* I love you more and more, every minute. *Now, s'il vous plait, me lady. Ma belle ange.*

LADY DASH. *My bill onge.*

L'ESTRANGE. No, me lady. *Ma belle ange. Ange, avec le nez. Qu'estque c'est,* what you call wis de noze.

LAMBSLEY. (*Aside*) I smell a rat. I'll fetch my uncle to find it out. [*Crèeps out.*]

L'ESTRANGE. *Ma belle ange.* My dear angel. Now me lady.

LADY DASH. *My belle onge. My dear angel.*

L'ESTRANGE. No me lady. *Ma belle.*

LADY DASH. *My bell.*

L'ESTRANGE. *Ange, ange. Wis de noze.*

LADY DASH. *Orge.*

L'ESTRANGE. *Pas précisément, me lady.—Mon amour. My love.*

LADY DASH. *Mon-a-mor. My love. I think we shall do better at the table.*

[They go to the table and sit down.]

L'ESTRANGE. *Je vous aime boucoup. (Orchard opens the door gently) I love you very much.*

ORCHARD. Hey day! that's plain enough. *(Aside)—* Did you ring, my lady?

LADY DASH. Why how is this? I fastened the door.

ORCHARD. Oh indeed! my lady. I did not know your ladyship wanted it fastened, or I would not have opened it. *[Exit, shutting the door violently.]*

LADY DASH. Only think of that, now. How provoking! with the very book in one's hand too.

SCENE II. *A Room in LADY DASHINGTON'S House.*

Enter SIR GEORGE DASHINGTON, LAMBSLEY running in after him, out of breath.

LAMBSLEY. I say uncle, what do you think?

SIR GEORGE. I scarcely know what I think, or what to think. *(sighing)*

LAMBSLEY. Only guests.

SIR GEORGE. Guess at what?

LAMBSLEY. Oh, you are to find that out.

SIR GEORGE. You look very warm, is the house on fire?

LAMBSLEY. Oh bless you no : but you'll be in a blaze, when I tell you. Guess again.

SIR GEORGE. But you must give me some idea of the subject, or I may guess all day.

LAMBSLEY. Well then, it's about my lady herself.

SIR GEORGE. Then I'll give it up. For she might do so many unheard of things, that I should guess for a week perhaps, and be none the nearer. What is it?

LAMBSLEY. Why there's a Frenchman making love to her.

SIR GEORGE. Eh? (*staring at Lambsley.*)

LAMBSLEY. There's a Frenchman making love to her. — Ah you may stare, but it's true; for I heard him myself.

SIR GEORGE. Impossible!

LAMBSLEY. Is it though impossible? I say I heard him myself. Why, what do you think, uncle, of his calling her his angel, and his love, over and over again; and telling her he loved her better every hour of his life. If that's not making love, I don't know what is. I'm sure I could not say half so much, for the life of me.

Enter ORCHARD.

ORCHARD. Oh I beg pardon, sir.

[*Exit.*

LAMBSLEY. That's her ladyship's own maid. She can tell you all about it, if she likes, I'll be bound. Oh she's

a cunning one, and such a fibber! I'll fetch her back again. [*Exit.*]

SIR GEORGE. I'm surely in a dream :—— a vile, base dream :

Where torturing spirits drag upon my heart,
And canker sweet affection's stream, by
Drinking at it's spring.—
Oh Fashion! Fashion! thoughtless giddy fiend!
How canst thou lead out blushing Beauty by the hand,
And 'midst thy gay, deceiving labyrinths,
Leave her in thy dizzy paths; while at thy feet,
Lamenting her sad fate, with tears of shame;
Sense, Virtue, Love, and Feeling, disregarded bend.
How canst thou lure the mother with her blooming
train,

Who steps so lightly forth, to meet thee at thy shrine.
Where thy gay messengers, each with a chain,
In ready lightness, bind their lovely brows;
And with the glitt'ring padlock of deceit,
Encircle round their yet untainted hearts,
The icy ring of thy captivity.
How canst thou, with a ruthless smile,
Seize on the veteran hand of age,
And clasp its shriv'lling fibres in thy grasp!
While with a band by Folly made,
Thou blind'st the glimm'ring eye, to lead it on,
And hand in hand; with Vanity's false step,
Drag'st with impetuous zeal the wither'd frame,
To hurl it to its fate. [*Exit.*]

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *A Room in LADY DASHINGTON'S House.*

Enter SIR GEORGE DASHINGTON, LAMBSLEY, and ORCHARD.

SIR GEORGE. You are Lady Dashington's maid, I believe?

ORCHARD. Yes sir.

SIR GEORGE. Do you know, who is with her ladyship?

ORCHARD. Not I, sir. I don't meddle with her ladyship's secrets.

LAMBSLEY. There's a fibber.

SIR GEORGE. Is it then a secret?

ORCHARD. Why as to that, sir, her ladyship makes it one; for I don't know who he is, no more than the man in the moon. As I say, if people will have people, that nobody knows any thing about, why one can only give a guess; that's all. But, as I say, a body will believe their own eyes and ears, after all's said and done. But, as I say, a still tongue makes a wise head; that's my way.

SIR GEORGE. What have you seen and heard, pray?

ORCHARD. Oh, sir! as to that Sir, there's no ripping one's tongue out, to make it speak: nor dragging out an eye, to look into it, and discover what it has seen; nor cutting an ear off, to find out what it has heard: for as I say, a body may be poor; but then one has tongue, eyes, and ears, the very same as one's betters, for the

matter of that; and one may do as one likes with them too.

SIR GEORGE. Now I'll tell you, my good woman; I am in earnest, and will not be trifled with. If you have any grounds for suspecting imprudent conduct in her ladyship, I command you, without hesitation, to speak openly. And if on the other hand, you have not, do her the justice to screen her from suspicion, by candidly avowing it. If you behave as you ought to do, I shall reward you: but, if I find you are acting from unjust motives, I will punish you to the utmost. I have very serious reasons for making inquiries, which no one would be so likely to answer as yourself; or I should not have condescended to interrogate a menial, upon the conduct of her mistress. I ask you again, do you know who is with Lady Dashington?

ORCHARD. (Aside) Oh you're thereabouts, are you? Um! I shan't say more than I like for all that.—

SIR GEORGE. Do you know who is with Lady Dashington at this moment, I repeat?

ORCHARD. To be sure I don't; I said so, before. How should I know, sir?

SIR GEORGE. That's not to the purpose; how you should know. I dare say you would not be long ignorant: and your being so sure you do not know, after the hints you have given, does not make me quite so sure, but that you do; and very well too.

ORCHARD. Why law a mercy, sir, I can't think how you can say so. I'm sure I've always lived in the best of families, and I never was so *misbelied*, in all my born days before. First one, and then another, tells me I'm a liar, and all about this strange Frenchman, that I know nothing about.

SIR GEORGE. First one, and then another! What! has it become a subject of inquiry, in this unceremonious manner?

ORCHARD. Why yes, sir; pretty well, for the matter of that.

SIR GEORGE. And pray what persons make these inquiries?

ORCHARD. Why, all the servants in the house, sir: and it is very hard for me to get so *misrespected* by every body, without any fault of one's own. And when I tell them, what my lady desired me to tell them, why law, they jeer at me at all rates.

SIR GEORGE. Upon my word; this is a pretty piece of business. And what did her ladyship desire you to say?

ORCHARD. Why says she, Orchard says she, you must tell the servants, that this gentleman is a smuggler, and brings smuggled lace, says she.

LAMBSLEY. Oh! that's the smuggler is it? Oh then he's the same man, is he? Now who could believe it?—Ah! then I've heard of him before, to be sure I have. And so—

ORCHARD. And so——

LAMBSLEY. Um! and so—— (*threatening Orchard, aside.*)

ORCHARD. And so, very well says I, my lady; without thinking any thing amiss. And so, when they asked who this Frenchman was, I told them what my lady said; and out they all burst a laughing: and says they, oh! Mrs. Parley vous, you're thereabouts are you? So they call me Mrs. Parley vous now; and I don't see why one should get such outlandish names, for other people. But

I keep up to what my lady desired me to say, and always tell them, I'm sure he's a smuggler.

LAMBSLEY. That's a bouncing lie, however. Why, uncle, I heard her the other day, with my own ears, telling old John Crosby the butler, that her ladyship was an old fool, and he told her, she ought to be ashamed of herself. And then she said —

SIR GEORGE. Silence, sir. It is of little consequence to me at present, what you heard her telling old John Crosby the butler : and therefore, do not interfere with this unfortunate affair, if you please. A smuggler, eh ! Well, but may not that really be the case ?—(*thoughtfully*) Upon consideration, I think it likely. Surely, it must be so.

ORCHARD. Law bless you, sir, no more than I'm a smuggler.

LAMBSLEY. Well I think you are something in that way ; I do indeed : you're very sly, you know you are.

ORCHARD. None of your impudence, sir, if you please.

LAMBSLEY. I tell you what, Mrs. Orchard, uncle's here now —

SIR GEORGE. I insist upon having no vulgar riot of this kind ; nor indeed any interruption whatever. I desire you to keep silence.

LAMBSLEY. Well then I will, uncle. (*doubling his fists at Orchard*)

SIR GEORGE. (*to Orchard*) Now pay serious attention to the question I am about to ask, and do not give me a saucy, or a thoughtless answer ; for much depends upon the truth of what her ladyship has asserted. And unless you have some very strong grounds for suspicion, I cannot but hope there may be some mistake, and that

the person is, what her ladyship represents.—I ask you, whether you really, and truly believe, that this person is not a smuggler of lace?

ORCHARD. Well then, Sir, I really, and truly believe, and more than that, I really and truly know he is not; and would take a bible oath of it this minute.

LAMBSLEY. Oh! she'd swear to any thing; she would indeed, uncle. But I do believe that's true enough, in all conscience.

SIR GEORGE. (*earnestly*) And what proofs have you, that he's not a smuggler.

ORCHARD. Why, sir, I never saw a scrap of his lace in all my life, that my lady ever bought of him; and he's being coming now, let me see — why near six weeks; two or three times a week. And my lady always turns me chop out, as soon as ever he comes in, and never does so, when any body else brings things for her ladyship to look at; and that's my reason for knowing he's not a smuggler; for as I say, —

SIR GEORGE. (*thoughtfully*) Why that certainly looks odd; but then might not her ladyship make purchases, without being obliged to shew you every thing?

ORCHARD. No, sir. (*consequently*)

SIR GEORGE. Why not, may I ask?

ORCHARD. Because that's quite impossible, sir. Besides, eyes are eyes, and ears are ears, and I don't think that smugglers are in the habit of recommending the things they sell, by telling people ——— but I'll say nothing more, for as I say, time shews every thing, and I shall only get myself into trouble. (*going*)

SIR GEORGE. (*seizing Orchard violently by the arm*)

But you must and shall speak, and plainly too. What did you see and hear?

ORCHARD. Law a mercy, sir! as I always say, this is what one gets. (*crying*) Why I say then, that smugglers, I've always heard, love people's money, and don't tell their customers that they love *them* so very much; and sit reading out of one book.

LAMBSLEY. The very words I heard with my own ears. Why she must have been there too then: a nasty, cunning slyboots.

SIR GEORGE. And can you take your oath of this?

ORCHARD. Yes, sir; and should not be daunted before any magistrate in England.

LAMBSLEY. No, trust you for that. But you have spoken the truth for once in your life, for I heard them myself, and saw them too.

SIR GEORGE. I can bear this no longer with patience. I'll convince myself at once.

[*Exit; Lambsley and Orchard following, fighting and squabbling.*]

SCENE II. LADY DASHINGTON'S *Boudoir*.

LADY DASHINGTON and L'ESTRANGE *seated at a table.*

LADY DASH. (*laying down a book*) Well, *Moseer*, I think that will do for to-day. And you will have the goodness to translate those little sentences, from my favourite authors, which I have given you, from English into French. They will have an excellent effect, to introduce now and then, as occasion requires. Indeed, one

cannot do well without them, in the course of conversation. Oh dear ! and there are two original lines written by a particular friend of mine, in this scrap book. One should have a stock of sentences about love, it is such a very common thing to talk about. (*taking up a book*) Let me see, I can find them in a moment I believe. Yes, here they are. Now if you will set them down, *Moseer*, I will read them to you ; or I don't know you had better look at them yourself. I'll shew you the lines. (*L'Es-trange takes hold of half the book—Sir George gently opens the door, and puts his head in*)

When love's wing flutters in the sun of hope,
How brightly doth it paint the cheek with blushes.

L'ESTRANGE. Vera ve-ra butefool ! Oh ve-ra !

LADY DASH. And I do declare here are a few lines of my own which I had quite forgotten, and I'm sure you'll think them very pretty too. I'm quite delighted that I have found them. I'll read them to you. I don't profess to be a poet, but they really are not bad. (*conceitedly*)

What is the emblem of sweet love ?
Oh ! 'tis a tender turtle dove !
Her nest is all her constant care,
For faithfully doth love rule there.

L'ESTRANGE. Oh diable ! peste !—dove—love. (*Aside*)
Oh charmante me ladesheep, butefool vera — ve-ra.

SIR GEORGE. (*bursting in*) Very disgraceful, very scandalous, very bare-faced, my Lady Dashington !
What does all this mean ?

LADY DASH. (*much confused, and trying to laugh*)

Oh nothing, Sir George, nothing at all. A mere *bagitale*, quite *badin-age*, nothing more.

SIR GEORGE. Quite bad in age indeed, my lady ; nothing can translate your conduct better. Your own vile pronounciation decides your cause too plainly. Love rules too ! Nothing but a rod of iron will ever rule you, my Lady Dashington.

LADY DASH. Well, *Moseer*, you may as well be set at liberty. It is a pity to detain you any longer.

L'ESTRANGE. Tank you, good me ladesheep. *Bon jour*, me lady, *et bon jour*, me lor.

SIR GEORGE. If you dare, sir, to attempt leaving this room, until an explanation has taken place, you may expect a just and immediate reward, from my resentment, for your presumption in interfering with this lady.

L'ESTRANGE. Eh ? (*shrugging his shoulders in surprise*)

LADY DASH. This is taking upon yourself rather too much, Sir George ; and I must remind you, that I am in my own house, and not accustomed to such liberties. This is going too far.

SIR GEORGE. It is indeed, my lady, either for ceremony, or delicacy.

LADY DASH. I do not understand you, Sir George. You've quite surprized me.

SIR GEORGE. I have indeed : and you have quite surprized me. Without further equivocation then, my lady, do you not blush to be thus discovered, with a person whose visits you encourage, risking your reputation, to say the least of it, by a conduct so truly disgraceful ? Regardless of your own propriety, and of the charges

which nature has entrusted to your care : your folly thus drives you headlong to your own ruin, and in all probability to theirs also. Oh Lady Dashington ! You are sinking a well of misery for yourself, into whose narrow confines the world will drive you, and heap its detestation and disgust upon your head ; until overwhelmed with shame and sorrow you'll cease to breathe, and slumber in an unlamented grave.

LADY DASH. I am all in amazement. You are surely not in earnest, Sir George. I am totally at a loss to comprehend, in what way my conduct should call down upon me this unwarrantable severity. I cannot understand it at all.

SIR GEORGE. But all your servants can, my lady.

LADY DASH. My servants, Sir George ! What do they say ? If you allude, which of course you do, to this gentleman ; he came here upon particular business, and I do not exactly see, that I am either accountable to you, or to my servants, for whom I choose to receive into my house ; and have a private conversation with.

SIR GEORGE. Are you a smuggler, sir ?

L'ESTRANGE. (*Indignantly*) Me, one smugglare. Ah, no, no ; me not one smugglare.

SIR GEORGE. Then what are you, sir ? And why are you here ?

L'ESTRANGE. Me ladesheep will be as goot to tell.

LADY DASH. I shall not put up with this, Sir George, I can tell you. And I am perfectly indifferent as to what you, or my impudent servants think. You, ought to know better ; their assurance, I impute to ignorance.

SIR GEORGE. Servants, my lady, are but too often the means, through which scandal sows her constant

showering seeds. She never fails to lure the ignorant and the envious. Scandal follows us too closely without a cause; but if by vice or folly we entice her on, how can we then assert that freeborn greatness of the soul, our innocence, that self-reflecting consequence which every honest character, high or low, has a right to claim. A guilty mind is but a bad defender of itself: too often, impatient of restraint, and fearful to be thought the thing it is, it boldly ventures forth in noisy vaunts, and in the levelling stream of vice it rushes on: while conscious rectitude in spite of fate, rears its unblushing head with modest confidence, and like the eagle, soaring far above, rises in tranquil majesty, by its own power, and leaves the grovelling reach and snares of man.

LADY DASH. I am so surprized and confounded, that I know not what to say.

SIR GEORGE. And well you may, my lady. Consider; and as the only act of justice in your power, acknowledge first your guilt, then strive to sin no more.

LADY DASH. Sin and guilt, Sir George! I cannot, I will not bear this false and scandalous attack. Although I don't choose to explain, why this gentleman is here, I in the most earnest words of truth and honor affirm, that there is no foundation whatever for your suspicions.

SIR GEORGE. Then why not in the words of truth and honor, affirm the truth itself? How else, my lady, is it possible to contradict plain facts, which, evidently, you strive to hide by falsehood.

LADY DASH. Plain facts, Sir George? I defy the whole world to accuse me of any dishonorable conduct, and —

SIR GEORGE. Nay nay, my lady; this glaring persec-

verance in the wrong, this proud avowal of your innocence, while guilt lurks in your heart, and makes you thus out-stare the truth, increases the heinousness of crime, and almost sinks you past its level, by deceit. I ask you, wherefore should such sentences be heard, as my own ears, and those of others have been witness to; from your lips, and those of this unknown person? Why should he address you by such language?—calling you his angel: base unnatural flattery! And why did I see you, as I did, swallowing with avidity, from the divided book, sentences which ill become a widowed matron to be brooding over, with an unknown, suspected, youthful man?

LADY DASH. Oh! I see the mistake. It is truly ridiculous, and as the surest proof how contemptuously I look upon your suspicions, I shall not enter into any explanation, further than to call upon that gentleman, to state upon his honor, whether I do, or do not merit this conduct from you; or the scandalous imputations thrown upon my character, through that business which he came here to transact. But I request, sir, (*to L'Estrange*) that what that business is, shall not be made known,

SIR GEORGE. And I call upon that gentleman, if he is a gentleman, or at all events, if he possesses the feelings of a man; to explain fully, for what purpose he came into this house. If, Lady Dashington, your own feelings call not for the nicety of a thorough explanation, I, as the protector of your children's honor, do: and I put it to his judgment and his feeling, to come forward as becomes a man.

L'ESTRANGE. With such an appeal; and placed, as I am, under appearances of dishonor; I at once throw off the mask, which sad necessity has forced upon me. I

am a gentleman——and the adverse fortunes of my dearest relatives, alone could make me seem what I am not. I must, my lady, in justice to you, and to my implicated feelings, give that plain and simple explanation which alone can clear us both.

LADY DASH. An Englishman!——An impostor, I declare! Well, sir, I was little prepared for this discovery, I can assure you. And had I known that you were not a Frenchman, I should never have engaged you as I did, rely upon it.

L'ESTRANGE. Had not that feeling been so general among people of your ladyship's rank, I need not have assumed disguise.

SIR GEORGE. Well then, sir, in plain English may I ask, what you came here for?

L'ESTRANGE. And, sir, in plain English truth I'll answer——to give her ladyship lessons in French; and the sentences and book alluded to, were the results.

SIR GEORGE. Lessons in French?—Lessons in folly! which, my lady, you must be now aware of, from the unnecessary suspicions you have brought upon yourself, by concealing an absurdity, at the risk of reputation. Thus, the character of a virtuous woman is too often tattered to rags, from her own imprudence, in giving a false colouring to an action, in itself without vice, merely to hide the glaring, yet innocent folly, from the eye of the world.

LADY DASH. Well, Sir George, you are very severe; and will, I dare say, make me the laughing stock of my whole family, in order to convince them, that my conduct is not so flagrant as it was imagined to be. And my own children will, I suppose, presume to lecture me, upon my folly, as you call it.

SIR GEORGE. Indeed, my lady, you are very much mistaken. I have the welfare of your children too much at heart, to give them through my means, a subject to insult a parent with. And if, from mistaken fondness, you have lost that influence which a parent should assume; that influence, which blended with affection should command respect; rely upon it, I should be the first to check the progress of so sad an evil to you, and to them: therefore, you need not fear from me, any exposure of your secret; which I trust will prove a lesson for the future: and I shall take upon myself to clear away the saucy inferences of ignorance.

LADY DASH. Well, Sir George, I think after all this unfair attack, that is the least you can do; and as you have it in your power, I thank you for your promise. And this gentleman, who, I must say, has deceived me very much, will, I doubt not, be glad to keep my secret, upon his own account.

L'ESTRANGE. I trust, my lady, that although adverse fortune has compelled me to appear in the character I have, I shall never basely forget that conduct of which my birthright should remind me. (*Lady Dashington retires to the back of the stage*) False shame has never made me yet forget, that I am a son: and conscious duty softens down the rigours of my fate; but never shall my actions be debased, while truth can clear them from suspected guilt.—My father was a gentleman of large fortune; but from his propensity for gaming, he in an evil hour lost nearly all he possessed; and having collected the fragments of his property, he retired overwhelmed with grief to the Continent, with his family. In a few years, all his resources failed; when stung with horror,

he put a period to his existence, leaving my unhappy mother, two sisters, an infant brother and myself, to struggle with the world. We came to England, and my mother sought assistance from her own relatives, and my father's also, but in vain: and I daily beheld the beings next my heart struggling with the privations of poverty. A gleam of sunshine broke upon my view. The proficiency which I had gained in languages, enabled me through the benevolent interference of a stranger, to give lessons, as a foreigner, in several families of distinction, who would not have received me otherwise. Life seemed to hang upon the chance; all those so dear to me rushed on my thoughts; I saw them through my means, rescued from misery and want;—beheld my patient suffering mother, the fountain of my life, placed in comparative affluence; my sisters too, the dear companions of my earlier days,—my smiling brother,—over whose infant head maternal sorrow poured a frequent shower——all these, I saw at once snatched from devouring poverty, and by my hand. I made the effort with a trembling heart,——success smiled on my hopes; and thankful for the bounties which I have, regret and not reproach, hangs in my mind, upon the memory of a lost, ill fated parent. Thus, have I troubled you, sir, with an unnecessary tale, but stifled as my pride has been, it panted with a double force to shew my honor's free.—And now I take my leave.

SIR GEORGE. Well sir, but first allow me to offer you my hand, and with it the assurance of my service. Your character deserves to wear its own bright hue, untainted by disguise. A better acquaintance may convince you how highly I esteem your sentiments: and rest assured, that although excellence and virtue must have struggles,

they will always meet rewards. Will you favor me by leaving your address, and if you will call upon me this day week, I then may have it in my power to convince you, how much I wish that you should call me friend.

L'ESTRANGE. A higher sentiment, sir, than self interest, will, I hope, urge me to deserve and esteem that valued name. In early life, the blessing of a father's eye shone upon my opening years; yes, sir, a father possessed of every noble feeling; but since the blast of fatal error crossed his unhappy path——from that sad hour, I have never known till now——My heart's too full—— I ——
[*Rushes off.*]

LADY DASHINGTON comes forward.

SIR GEORGE. Well, my lady; there's a perfect model of the duties of a child and brother.

LADY DASH. Why yes, he seems to have good feelings enough; but I had not time to listen to him. I'm glad he's gone, for I'm sick of the business, altogether, and really, the sooner one forgets it the better. Well Sir George, what do you think of your nieces?

SIR GEORGE. Unfeeling, thoughtless woman! (*Aside*)—I think them, what every body else must think them; in appearance, lovely girls,—very lovely; but I fear their minds are rendered not so lovely as their forms, by bad example, in the ruinous false career they are running; and so soon too after the death of their father.

LADY DASH. Why, you would not have me shut them up?

SIR GEORGE. No, far from it; but there is a happy medium to be drawn, between shutting them up, and by

your own hand, leading them into such a lamentable routine of gaiety and folly.

LADY DASH. Well, Sir George, we shall see whether I am right or wrong, very soon, I believe.

SIR GEORGE. I have many, many fears for the result, my lady.

LADY DASH. Well, when a coronet is fixed upon Miss Dashington's head, which I fancy will shortly be the case; I suppose you will then, have no cause to call my plans into question.

SIR GEORGE. A coronet! Has my niece then received proposals from a nobleman?

LADY DASH. Why he has not yet exactly come to an *eclar-ciss-ment*.

SIR GEORGE. (*Staring*) What is his name, my lady?

LADY DASH. The young Earl of Ravensdale.

SIR GEORGE. A very desirable match indeed! But I should not think the life my niece is leading could be very much to his satisfaction, from the character I have heard of him.

LADY DASH. You have heard of him then, Sir George? Abroad, I suppose.

SIR GEORGE. Yes, I have heard of him. But if he has not yet come to an *eclar-ciss-ment*, as your ladyship calls it, what induces you to think, that he has any serious intentions towards my niece.

LADY DASH. Oh! there's no mistaking his real meaning.

SIR GEORGE. His real meaning! But what is your ladyship's reason for suspecting his meaning.

LADY DASH. Oh there's a certain *jance coi*, you know.

SIR GEORGE. (staring at her) Oh! Je ne sais quois.

LADY DASH. Yes.

SIR GEORGE. What, I suppose you mean certain pointed attentions.

LADY DASH. Why, not exactly that, neither: but —

SIR GEORGE. But what then, Lady Dashington? (impatiently)

LADY DASH. Why, he has been here very much of late; and when we were out, he has frequently waited, until we returned. And he has repeatedly said that Matilda was the most lovely girl, and had the finest face he ever saw.

SIR GEORGE. Well there is some truth in that, but this must be every body's opinion, and therefore nothing can be drawn from that. His frequent waiting visits must certainly have some meaning in them. And was my niece aware of this herself?

LADY DASH. Why no.

SIR GEORGE. Then I hope your ladyship has not yet made your ideas on the subject known to her.

LADY DASH. Indeed but I have, Sir George. And why should I not? The circumstance speaks for itself.

SIR GEORGE. Well; well, but I would first have let Lord Ravensdale speak for himself. In these affairs, a parent cannot be too cautious. I think you have done very wrong. The affections of a youthful heart are often tampered with, and broken, by a mistaken and too hasty judgment. I am afraid circumstances will turn out very differently from what your ladyship expects.

Enter FOOTMAN.

FOOTMAN. The young ladies will be happy to see you, sir, in the music room, if you please.

SIR GEORGE. Very well, I will attend them immediately. [*Exit Footman.*] We must have some further serious conversation upon this subject, my lady.

LADY DASH. Whenever you are at liberty, Sir George.

SIR GEORGE. Very well, I shall be with your ladyship again presently.

[*Exit.*]

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE I. LADY DASHINGTON'S *Boudoir.*

Enter ORCHARD.

ORCHARD. I suppose I shall have my head dragged off before long, at this rate : an ill-natured old cross patch. I dare say indeed ! he's to come and turn the house out of window, because he's my late silly old master's brother. But he is, for all the world, the very shade of him in his ways, as well as his face. Threatening me indeed ! and telling me, that he'd turn me out of the house : and ordering me to beware of my scandalous tongue, for the future. I'd have him to know who he's talking to : I shall not put up with his impertinence. Bless me ! one had need look about one.

Enter LADY DASHINGTON.

LADY DASH. Where's that woman's bill, Orchard?

ORCHARD. Here, my lady. (*fetching a paper from a table, and giving it to Lady Dashington*)

LADY DASH. (*looking over the bill*) Why the sum is amazing! Surely, I never could have had all these things, in so short a time, Orchard. The sum is really immense.

ORCHARD. As to that, my lady, bills soon mount up. And as I say, any lady dressing so well, and with such taste as your ladyship does, must expect large bills. You know, my lady, you always will have every thing, before it comes out.

LADY DASH. Why yes, Orchard, I believe I can say, that I have generally the first of every thing.

ORCHARD. Well, my lady, then of course you know—

LADY DASH. Why she has absolutely charged me thirty guineas for that last opera head-dress. However, it certainly was very elegant.

Enter FOOTMAN.

FOOTMAN. There's a young person waiting from Lady Diamond, my lady.

LADY DASH. What does she want?

FOOTMAN. I don't know, but she says she has a message from her ladyship, which she cannot deliver to any one, but yourself, my lady.

LADY DASH. Is it her ladyship's maid?

FOOTMAN. Oh dear no, my lady.

LADY DASH. What sort of a person is it then?

FOOTMAN. (contemptuously) Oh a tidyish looking young woman, my lady.

LADY DASH. Well, you may let her come up.

[Exit Footman.]

LADY DASH. I should'nt wonder bye, the bye — oh dear! I dare say it's some beggar. I never thought of that, at the moment. She would have sent her maid with any particular message.

Enter SIR GEORGE DASHINGTON. Exit ORCHARD, tossing her head. SIR GEORGE takes a book, and sits down at a table.

Enter FOOTMAN with a YOUNG LADY.

FOOTMAN. The young woman from my Lady Diamond, my lady. *[Exit.]*

LADY DASH. What have you to say to me? You've a message from Lady Diamond, *(looking at the bill)* hav'nt you?

STRANGER. Her ladyship led me to hope that —

LADY DASH. That what pray?

STRANGER. That your ladyship would be humane enough to afford me some assistance, in my present state of extreme affliction and distress. I have not a friend, or a relation in the world; *(bursting into tears)* my dear father died yesterday of a broken heart: and now I'm desolate, forlorn, and poor. Oh my lady! in mercy, save me by your charity!

LADY DASH. Upon my word, her ladyship is very good. She gives me credit for more money, than I know what to do with. It's as much as I can possibly do to pay

my bills, which I am always in the habit of settling regularly. It's all very well for people who run into every extravagance, and never think of paying their tradespeople; they can afford to squander their ready money; but I'm sure, I have never five shillings to give away. I wish people would'nt trouble me by sending people to ask charity indeed. It's quite out of the question. I'm sure, Lady Diamond has plenty to relieve you with, if she chooses, without sending her beggars to me. The hundreds and hundreds she throws away, ay, literally throws away, upon the turn of a card: she might, methinks, have spared a few guineas, instead of sending you to me. I must really put a stop to this. She sent a woman and child here, a short time ago. And what did she give you herself pray? [*the Stranger is silent*—what did she give you herself, I say?

STRANGER. (*reluctantly*) Nothing.

LADY DASH. Nothing! Well I thought so; and sent you to me, to give something for both. And she thinks that I shall be simple enough to make up for her nothing. Upon my word, I insist upon your going back to her ladyship and——

STRANGER. Oh mercy! mercy! (*falling at her feet*) I ask for help, for life. Without assistance, I must perish. Oh! let these tears, that fall at your feet in humble supplication, plead for me with success. My life hangs on a tender thread; I am nearly famished.——

LADY DASH. Well, well, the servants shall give you something to eat; but there are plenty of rich people who would relieve you, better than I can. Oh plenty, if you could but find them out. Let me see, there's——

STRANGER. Ay, and thousands too; who bursting from

the trammels of their greatness, descend with pitying hearts, and gentle hands, to wipe away the tears from sorrow's eye : and who, by showering their blessings, will by a higher hand than theirs again, be doubly blessed themselves. My heart feels sick, and has almost forgotten how to beat. I fear I—I (*staggering—Sir George comes forward and receives her as she is falling*)

SIR GEORGE. Poor sufferer! lean, lean your drooping head upon a heart that answers your appeal — Oh base, unfeeling woman! the hour of retribution's near, and tremble for your fate.

[*Exit; leading off the Stranger; Lady Dashington looks earnestly after them.*]

LADY DASH. I am wrong — I feel that I am cruel too.—Was I not once poor myself? and friendless? (*thoughtfully*) Ay, Lady Dashington, friendless indeed. Then — yes, then my heart would have yearned towards such a sufferer; and had I possessed the smallest means, I then would willingly have shared them with her. But now — I well may shrink to say, even to myself, what I am now. But it's no use thinking. Why should I make myself uncomfortable, by reflecting on other people's miseries: besides, Sir George will do something for her.

Enter FOOTMAN, followed by LADY FLIGHT.

FOOTMAN. Lady Flight, my lady.

LADY DASH. Ah! *boun jour*, my dear Lady Flight.

LADY FLIGHT. Ah! *bon jour*. *Pourquoi n'eumes nous pas le plaisir de vous voir, hier au soir.*

LADY DASH. What does that mean now? (*Aside*)

Why thank you, I am not quite so well to-day, as I should wish to be.

LADY FLIGHT. Ridiculous, ignorant woman! (*Aside*) I am sorry for that: but I said, what is the reason we had not the pleasure of seeing you last night?

LADY DASH. Oh, you are very good. Why I have been rather agitated, by the arrival of Sir George.

LADY FLIGHT. What! is it possible that you allowed an antiquated old Goth, who has been shut up from the world five and twenty years, to agitate you! You should look upon him as nobody.

LADY DASH. Why really, I did look upon him as nobody, and that's the truth; for I thought verily he was the ghost of my poor late Sir James, when I first saw him last night. He is so extremely like him.

LADY FLIGHT. Dear bless me! I hope he is not like him in mind too, for he was a sad troublesome personage to deal with; in the way of honor and principle, and all those sort of old fashioned things. I think you bore it with singular patience.

LADY DASH. Indeed he is like him in every way. He has already been interfering with every body in the house.

LADY FLIGHT. Then I should vote him pretty quickly out of the house, if I were you, without any ceremony. Ha! ha! ha! how you are plagued with sentimental honorable old people, and foolish young ones! I am sure it must go very much against your grain; a woman of your spirit too. Well, I say get rid of him.

LADY DASH. But I cannot just yet. You know he is guardian to the girls, and has to settle all my affairs, which could not be done until that ridiculous packet of papers has been looked at.

LADY FLIGHT. How truly ridiculous! but there is no accounting for the whims and fancies of people, who fancy themselves every thing but what they ought to be.

LADY DASH. No indeed, that's true enough. I am sure there are sufficient proofs of that in my case.

LADY FLIGHT. Yes, thou monster of vanity there are indeed. (*Aside*) Well, but what is to be done with Miss Sophia, and Master Lambsley too? ha! ha! ha! ha! (*laughing immoderately*)

LADY DASH. Ah, you would not laugh, if you had been worried with him for years, as I have been.

LADY FLIGHT. Perhaps not: but I never can think of him even, without laughing, ha! ha! ha! and and as to seeing him, it's quite a treat; ha! ha! ha! I hope you will call him in, he is one of my greatest pets in the laughing way. You must excuse me, ha! ha! ha! Do have him in.

LADY DASH. Not I indeed; I have had too much of him already: but I shall soon be rid of him now. A pet indeed! you would soon get into pets enough with him, to prevent much in the laughing way.

LADY FLIGHT. I must not let the time pass over; I must get what I want of her, for fear of interruption. (*Aside*) My dear friend, I have another little favour to ask of you.

LADY DASH. I guess what it is. (*Aside*) Well, any thing in my power; you know you have only to mention it.

LADY FLIGHT. You are a dear, kind friend, but I am almost ashamed to trouble you.

LADY DASH. Oh! nonsense.

LADY FLIGHT. Well then, if you can conveniently

lend me a few more hundreds, why—you will quite set me up again, for I have been rather unlucky, you must know; but I will repay you altogether, as soon as my lord comes to town.

LADY DASH. What! have you lost all I lent you the other day? my dear Lady Flight!

LADY FLIGHT. Every pound.

LADY DASH. Dear me! you are very unlucky. I wonder you don't leave off those terrible cards. Consider what sums you are always losing. And after all, what pleasure can there be? on the contrary, nothing but vexation from such frequent losses. And that sad game you are so fond of —

LADY FLIGHT. Why as to that, Lady Dashington, you do not play my game, most certainly; but you pack your own cards as you like, and play them too. Besides, there are many games to play, without cards: we all try at odd tricks, in some way or other. Well, I only want you to lend me three hundred: that will do for me at present.

LADY DASH. Oh you shall have it.

LADY FLIGHT. I can return you all in less than a fortnight.

LADY DASH. (*Aside*) Yes I dare say. If ever I get it again, I shall wonder. But it is worth while throwing away a few hundreds, to prevent her from quizzing me so immoderately, as she used to do. (*going to a cabinet, to get money out, and giving it to Lady Flight.*)

LADY FLIGHT. Thank you, thank you. You are a dear kind soul, the very best friend I have.—If she was not frightened out of her wits, she would not let me have a single pound, to save me from ruin. (*Aside*)

Enter LAMBSLEY.

LADY DASH. What do you want, sir?

LAMBSLEY. Why I want uncle, I thought he was here.

LADY FLIGHT. Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! Well Master Lambsley, how do you do?

LAMBSLEY. I shan't tell you. I'll thank you to keep your masterly tongue to yourself. You're too free in your ways, for my liking, Lady Flighty.

LADY FLIGHT. Well now, that is a pity, for I have a great liking for your ways, ha! ha! ha! I am sure we ought to be very great friends, for I like you uncommonly.

LAMBSLEY. Oh dear me! well if ever I heard any think like that, however. I am sure you ought to be quite ashamed of yourself, Lady Flighty, to talk to any young man in such a way: it almost puts me out of countenance, it's quite shocking.

LADY FLIGHT. Ha! ha! ha!

LAMBSLEY. Oh you are very bold, very bold indeed.

Enter ORCHARD.

ORCHARD. Well, my lady, here's a pretty piece of business. I'm afraid to tell your ladyship.

LADY DASH. What has happened now, pray?

LAMBSLEY. Why another of her ghost stories to be sure.

ORCHARD. Ay it's a story that will make you tremble, sir, from head to foot, like an *askin* leaf, I'll warrant me. Miss Sophia has run off with Lord Ravensdale.

LADY DASH. It never can be true ! I'll not believe it.

LAMBSLEY. No no, it's one of her lies. I'll go and tell uncle.

ORCHARD. You may save yourself the trouble Mr. Lambsley : Sir George knows already. I left old John Crosby telling him ; for he found it out, as he always does every thing.—A curious old rascal. (*Aside*) One didn't think, and another didn't think of not seeing Miss Sophia, but every body recollects now, that they hav'nt seen her since nine o'clock this morning. Off she's gone sure enough : and there's poor Miss Dashington in fits, and all manner of things ; so I came to tell your ladyship.

LAMBSLEY. (Crying) I'll not believe that Sophy's run away. She wouldn't leave me for any body, I know. She's only gone to take a walk.

LADY DASH. Why she has only walked a little before her time then, for out of this house she would soon have been turned. However, she is not worth thinking about, a sly disgraceful creature. But really, it is rather serious — Lord Ravensdale behaving in this way. His waiting visits now speak for themselves. My poor Matilda !

LADY FLIGHT. I told you not to be too sure of his lordship, if you recollect, Lady Dashington.

Enter MISS DASHINGTON, weeping violently.

LADY DASH. Come, come, my love, pray compose yourself ; there are plenty more men in the world, thank goodness. You need not go begging, either with your face or your fortune.

MISS DASH. Yes, mamma, I should not mind a bit about it, only for that sly Sophia; an artful shameless creature. (*crying violently; Lambsley sets up a fresh cry with her.*)

LADY FLIGHT. A delightful musical society this, a well regulated family upon my conscience. (*Aside*) Come come, Master Lambsley, don't fret.

LAMBSLEY. Ah! you may master me now, as much as you like; I don't care for any thing, now Sophy's left me. If it's true, I shall break my heart. To think of Sophy's behaving so! Oh! (*crying*)

LADY FLIGHT. Come come: it's not so bad as you all imagine. I am certain Lord Ravensdale is a man of honor, and after all, it will only turn out to be a run-away match. She is Lady Ravensdale, by this time, or I am much mistaken. [*Miss Dashington stamps and cries.*]

LAMBSLEY. Do you think so, Lady Flighty?

LADY FLIGHT. I do indeed.

LAMBSLEY. Oh! bless you! I never liked you so well before.

LADY FLIGHT. Come come, Miss Dashington; you must rise superior to this affair, and convince every one how little you think about it. You see after all, it is but a trifling mistake of her ladyship's; rather too hasty or so. But I think I can answer, that you will sustain no disgrace from your cousin: it will only make this difference that she will be the Countess of Ravensdale, and you may be in possession of a higher title. [*Miss Dashington stamps, and cries again violently.*] Dear me! it seems that my intended consolation rather increases grief. Well then, as I am any thing but a comforter, in the present

dilemma, I will take my leave, and look in again, bye and bye, as I go to the Marchioness's to dinner; and then I hope you will have had time to look upon this affair in a different light. Of course your ladyship will not be there, as this has occurred?

LADY DASH. No, I think not; I shall send my apology, and you'll not give any hint, my dear Lady Flight.

LADY FLIGHT. Oh of course not. I wish your ladyship had been as cautious, as I recommended you to be. But when a real vexation has occurred, it is not kind to be the reminder of it. And I sincerely hope (*taking Miss Dashington by the hand*) that you will soon be able to laugh upon the subject. Come Miss Dashington, your face was not intended for tears; and now I'll bid you adieu; (*turns to Lambsley*) and you and I, Master Lambsley will have a good laugh together, after all.

LAMBSLEY. Well, if all's right with Sophy, as you think it is, I don't care about your laughing at me, and with me too. Good bye, Lady Flighty, I believe you mean well enough, after all.

LADY FLIGHT. Well, adieu for the present, to you all.
Adieu. *[Exit.]*

LADY DASH. I wonder you had not more prudence, than to come in the way you did, Orchard. I suppose if the whole Town had been here, it would have been just the same.

LAMBSLEY. Why she did it on purpose, to be sure she did.

ORCHARD. I didn't know that any body was with your ladyship.

LAMBSLEY. There's a bouncer for you. Why she told me herself, Lady Flighty was here. But you'll find her

out. I've always told you what a liar she is. As old John Crosby the butler says ——

LADY DASH. Well sir, I don't want to make any more discoveries at present. I think you had better hold your tongue, about other people's deception, and reflect a little upon your sister's. A disgraceful impostor.

Enter FOOTMAN.

FOOTMAN. Sir George begs to speak a few words with your ladyship.

LADY DASH. I will attend him immediately.

[Exit Footman.]

Come, my dear, you must now try to compose yourself.
(Exit, leading off Miss Dashington)

ORCHARD. Ay indeed, as her ladyship says, I think you had better not talk of other folks, Mr. Lambsley, but look at home.

LAMBSLEY. Now only say another word about sister Sophy, and see what I'll give you that you won't like.

ORCHARD. Why I care no more for you, or your sister Sophy, than I do for a pig's ear.

LAMBSLEY. Only say that again now, if you dare.

ORCHARD. Dare indeed ! I dare say it, and do, that's more ; over and over again. I care no more for you, or your sister Sophy than I do for a pig's ear.

LAMBSLEY. Well, we'll see whether you don't care for me and sister Sophy, and a pig's ear too. *(goes to her and pinches her ear. She screams, he runs away, and she after him)*

SCENE II. *A Drawing Room.*

SIR GEORGE DASHINGTON *sitting at a table.*

Enter LADY DASHINGTON.

LADY DASH. Well Sir George, this is a pretty piece of business about Sophia. I should think the opinion which you expressed this morning of her is changed by this time.

SIR GEORGE. Not in the least, my lady. What she has done was entirely under my sanction. I myself gave her away, this morning, and she is now the Countess of Ravensdale.

LADY DASH. Under your sanction, Sir George? You gave her away?

SIR GEORGE. Yes, my lady. The fact is, that upon my arrival in England three weeks ago, Lord Ravensdale came immediately to make proposals for the hand of Sophia, at the same time regretting the mistake which he was aware your ladyship was labouring under, with respect to his supposed intentions to Miss Dashington; which rendered an immediate explanation necessary: and from the very painful situation Sophia was placed in, he begged of me to decide upon the best plan, for sparing her feelings. And I for all reasons, fixed upon this morning for the marriage, and in justice to the excellent heart of Sophia, I must add, greatly against her wishes; unknown as it was to your ladyship.

LADY DASH. Well, Sir George, I am surprized indeed.

SIR GEORGE. And I trust the discovery will act as a

lesson, upon any future occasion, and that your ladyship will bear in mind your mistaken conjectures, which were likely to interfere so seriously with the affections of a child.

LADY DASH. Well, Sir George, I confess myself in fault, most certainly, and I merit the severest censure, I candidly own.

SIR GEORGE. Enough my lady; your own feelings then will be a better check than any thing I can urge. A sincerely acknowledged fault is more than half amended.

Enter FOOTMAN.

MR. COURTNEY and LAMBSLEY following.

FOOTMAN. Mr. Courtney, my lady.

MR. COURTNEY. Your ladyship, I hope, is well to-day. Your most obedient, Sir George.

SIR GEORGE. Mr. Courtney, I am happy to see you.

LAMBSLEY. I've told Mr. Courtney that Sophy's married, and he is so glad, and so am I. (*capering about*)

SIR GEORGE. Come Lambsley, pray be more quiet, or you must leave the room. (*Lambsley sits down*)

LADY DASH. Well, Mr. Courtney, I hope when these papers are done with there will be no more sealed packets to open. (*sitting down*)

SIR GEORGE. The papers had better be examined, without further remarks of that description, (*takes the packet from Mr. Courtney*) Well my lady, what provision do you intend to make for Lambsley? Sophia is provided for, Lord Ravensdale has positively

declined any settlement being made upon her, by her own relatives; but on the contrary, has made the most generous arrangements himself. It now therefore only remains for your ladyship to take into consideration the wishes of your late husband, and to act in a manner that becomes the generous confidence he placed in you, by leaving you, as he has, to dispose of his large personal fortune, according to his wishes or not.

LADY DASH. Indeed, I shall make no provision for Lambsley, I do assure you. I'm not so fond of him. A liberal settlement for him indeed! No, Sir George, I am not such a simpleton. Let him go to Sophia; she can afford well enough to support him, and as Lord Ravensdale has been so liberal, he can have no earthly objection to extend his liberality to his lady's own brother. And besides, as you seem so partial to him yourself, perhaps you'll like to keep him with you. He'll be a pleasant companion, I promise you. Now you see, this is another chance for him; he can't want my assistance, with so lucky a sister, and so kind an uncle. *(Sir George is silent. He opens the packet and examines the papers)*

SIR GEORGE. Another will! What can this mean? *(opens it, and drops the rest of the papers)*

LADY DASH. (starting up) Another will, Sir George! *(greatly agitated)* Another will!!

SIR GEORGE. Another will, my lady; and dated only a few weeks before my brother left this country for the Continent: and the contents far different from the one, which left your ladyship in possession of his large fortune: you must prepare yourself, I am sorry to say, for a sad reverse.

LADY DASH. Reverse of fortune, Sir George! What do you mean?

SIR GEORGE. The whole of my brother's property, my lady, is here — (*pauses and looks at Lady Dashington*)

LADY DASH. Speak, tell me, I conjure you tell me.

SIR GEORGE. Then, if I must pronounce the sad intelligence—except five hundred a year to your ladyship, and ten thousand pounds to each of my nieces, my brother has bequeathed his whole personal property — to —

LADY DASH. To whom?

SIR GEORGE. To Lambsley — to whose generosity, and feeling, he has left a special injunction to add to your ladyship's comforts, as he thinks fit.

LADY DASH. I'll not believe it. It never can be so: it's a base forgery. (*distractedly*) I'll protest against it, ay, in every court in England. Give it to me. (*darting at the paper*)

MR. COURTNEY. (*stepping between Lady Dashington and Sir George*) I am sorry to assure your ladyship, that it is indeed a genuine will. I myself witnessed the execution of it.

LADY DASH. (*staggering*) This is a blow I was not prepared for: my brain whirls round. I — I — (*sinks into a chair*)

LAMBSLEY. What am I to have, uncle?

SIR GEORGE. Your uncle's fortune.

LAMBSLEY. There's a thing, there's a thing. Who could believe it? What will old John Crosby the butler say? (*dancing madly about, and going to Lady Dashington*) What do you say now? You told me last night, we should see who would — (*Lady Dashington*)

starts up and rushes out. Mr. Courtney follows her

SIR GEORGE. Do not leave her, Mr. Courtney, I beseech you. (*calling after Mr. Courtney as he runs off*) I am sorry, sir, (*to Lambsley*) to see you make so immediate and so bad a use of the bounty, which your late uncle has thus showered upon you. Yes, I am sorry, sir, to find that you know so little how to treat the wife of your benefactor, by insulting her through the very means, which he hoped you would know how to use in a far different manner. For shame! for shame! Remember, sir, that your own good fortune should teach you to respect the calamities of others, and should teach you also to deal with a christian hand, the softening balm of kindness and assistance. Your uncle, sir, thought you would not so abuse his misplaced generosity. At the same time that he gives you his fortune, he recommends you to share his bounty with your aunt and cousins.

LAMBSLEY. Well, uncle, and so I will. I'll do any thing that poor uncle wished. She may have all the money, if she'll not turn me out: and will let me live in peace.

SIR GEORGE. But the house is your own. Lady Dashington cannot turn you out: on the contrary, you may turn out whom you please.

LAMBSLEY. Then please the pigs, Mrs. Orchard shall budge. I'll just go and tell old John Crosby the butler. How glad he'll be. (*going*)

SIR GEORGE. You have a nobler duty than that to perform. You must now convince your aunt, that having it in your power, you wish to make her amends for the disappointment which you are the sole occasion of — you will then shew her how wrong she has behaved, by your

generosity and kindness : and not by overbearing taunts, throw the burthen upon her, which you have found so hard to endure yourself. I'll go and speak to her, and tell her how much you wish to serve her.

LAMBSLEY. I wish you would, uncle. She'll hear reason from you, and she won't from me.

SIR GEORGE. But I desire that you remain here until I return ; and not make this known to every one in the house, at present.

LAMBSLEY. No, no ; I'll stop here, uncle. [*Exit Sir George*] How I do long to tell old John Crosby. I think there'd be time just to ring the bell and send for him up a minute. (*going to the bell*)

Enter ORCHARD.

Oh, I say, I want you.

ORCHARD. Yes sir ; and I'll warrant my lady will want you presently, I'm come to tell her and to shew her my ear too.

LAMBSLEY. She'll not give an ear to you now, if you do ; for I'll warrant no such thing. I'm master of this house now, and so I tell you at once : out you shall budge, in' less than an hour. Uncle made another will, which has just been read here, and I'm to have all his money.

ORCHARD. Ha ! ha ! ha ! You have all his money indeed ! and master of this house too !

LAMBSLEY. Now dont aggravate me. You know I don't stand upon ceremony. I'll pull your other ear, if you don't take care. I will indeed.

Enter LADY DASHINGTON, SIR GEORGE, and
MR. COURTNEY.

SIR GEORGE. Leave the room (*to Orchard, who tosses her head, and exit*)

LAMBSLEY. Well aunt, now we'll be friends for good : and uncle will just do what he likes about the money.

LADY DASH. I cannot speak what my real feelings are. I ill deserve this noble treatment from you, Lambsley. (*much affected*) You must forgive, and strive to forget my unkindness. (*cries ; Lambsley cries too*)

LAMBSLEY. I can never bear to see any body cry. I suppose I am crying now for joy, but you are not, aunt, so don't cry any more. Why you know, it will make no difference to you, only I do think you had better take my uncle's advice a little, now and then.

LADY DASH. This noble generosity, and from one too, who has every reason to despise me for my unkindness, quite overpowers me.—I cannot consent to your liberality, Lambsley.

SIR GEORGE. But why not? I am convinced of Lambsley's sincerity; and your ladyship need not fear any obstacles from me. And all may still be in your own power.

LADY DASH. No, Sir George; my determination is fixed. Resigned to the justness of my fate, I am resolved in future to deserve what I have yet been unworthy of, your kindness and esteem. For myself, I most firmly decline Lambsley's unmerited liberality.—Would that my husband, to whose counsels I was deaf, wrapt in the folly of my own career, oh ! would he were alive, to see

and hear how I regret my errors, and how firmly I resolve!—(*weeps*)

SIR GEORGE. He lives again, and rises from his fears,
While new born hopes burst on his coming years.
(*throwing off his disguise, and discovering Sir James Dashington*)

LADY DASH. My husband!! (*throwing herself into Sir James's arms*)

LAMBSLEY. Oh! my uncle, my real uncle alive! oh what will old John Crosby say? Who could believe it? Huzza! huzza!

SIR JAMES. Come, come; all that's past must be forgotten.—We have mutual cause for rejoicing, and as this plot has succeeded beyond my utmost hopes, I trust that we shall reap from it a mutual reward. Before the marriage, I of course discovered myself to Sophia and Lord Ravensdale: and they are now waiting in the hope of an entire reconciliation. And I requested Mr. Courtney to make known to our children, that their father's still alive. Ah, here my girls come.

Enter MR. COURTNEY, with the YOUNG LADIES.
They run to SIR JAMES, who receives them with great affection.

Enter SOPHIA and LORD RAVENSDALE. A mutual reconciliation takes place.

LAMBSLEY. I'll just step and tell old John Crosby.
(*Aside, and running out*)

*Enter ORCHARD; who screams violently
at seeing Sir James.*

SIR JAMES. Ay, you may well be terrified. You are a very base and a very dangerous woman; and I desire you to leave the house this very day.

ORCHARD. (*falling on her knees*) Oh! do pray forgive me, Sir James. I was not in fault—I can explain —

SIR JAMES. No more. I despise your meanness alike with your deception. Away, and take this wholesome lesson with you, that the mischief which a bad heart contrives for the injury of others, is sure to become the means of ensnaring itself: and will always be discovered and disgraced, as it deserves. Begone; and for the future strive to act differently. No more — I am resolved.

ORCHARD. (*rising*) Oh very well, I've always lived in the best of families, and I'm not going to break my heart for leaving this. Eyes are eyes, and ears are ears, and I've got a tongue after all's said and done; and people had better not take away other people's characters, or I shall just convince them that I can talk, as well as they can. And as I say, if that Frenchman and her ladyship —

SIR JAMES. Begone thou daring wickedness. Beware of your tongue, or I may yet have an account with you, not easily settled.

ORCHARD. Oh dear me! Oh bless my heart: only think of that now. Who cares —

[*Exit, tossing her head with great insolence.*]

Enter LAMBSLEY and CROSBY.

LAMBSLEY. Then, look at him yourself, and see if it is'n't real uncle James.

CROSBY. That I should have lived to see my dear master alive, and safe back again! (*much affected*) If the sincere wishes and blessings of a faithful old servant, upon this joyful occasion, will be acceptable, Sir James——

SIR JAMES. (*Shaking Crosby heartily by the hand*) The kind wishes of an honest heart must always be acceptable, my good Crosby, and the man who can look with indifference upon sincere gratitude, does not deserve to feel that joy, which I do at this moment.

Enter FOOTMAN.

FOOTMAN. Lady Fli——i——ght. (*staring aghast at Sir James and running out again*)

Enter LADY FLIGHT.

LAMBSLEY. Ah! Lady Flighty, here's work for you. You told me true, you told me true; Sophy's married, and uncle's alive! Sophy's married, and uncle's alive! (*singing*) You said we should laugh together, and so we will, ha! ha! ha! and we'll dance together too. (*dancing about, and seizing Lady Flight by the hand*)

LADY FLIGHT. Well, well, we'll have a dance together, Lambsley, but suppose we stop a little for some sort of music. Upon my word, I am so surprized altogether, that I know not whom to congratulate first; but as the

dead come to life again, is the greatest wonder, I must begin with you, Sir James.

LADY DASH. But that will not surprize you more, my dear Lady Flight, than to find that I am an altered woman ; and that having, by unmerited generosity, been taught a lesson which has brought me to my senses, I have resolved to give over my career of folly, and strive for the future to deserve those blessings, which I have hitherto so misused. I wish that I could induce you to make as firm a determination against those terrible cards. You have, I believe, an excellent heart ; and if you could but once resolve ——

LADY FLIGHT. Well, well, I know I am wrong, but habit is a sad misguider, a heavy contributionist against reason : however, the moment of surprize at a good example should not be lost, and therefore I will —— what? Bless me ! it sticks in my throat. Evil is not so ready to quit us, I find, as it is to lead us on. I think I want your assistance, Sir James.

SIR JAMES. With all my heart, and if I should be so fortunate as to be an instrument in the aid of so good a cause ——

LADY FLIGHT. Enough, enough, that's just enough. Thank you, Sir James, only give me one moment, and — oh dear ! it only wants one good effort.——Bless me ! I've conquered. I do think all the knaves in the pack were trying to choak me, but you've loosed even Pam himself, Sir James, ha ! ha ! ha !——Well I was somewhat staggered the other night, by my heavy losses at play, and only wanted this opportunity, which has so luckily happened, to confirm my good resolution. And I do now declare, before this goodly assemblage, that I never will

touch another card again —— except indeed —— but I must make no exceptions, else may I tumble headlong into the gulf again.

LAMBSEY... Oh I am so happy! Huzza! huzza!
(*singing and dancing*) That all should have turned out so well. Who could believe it? Huzza! huzza!

THE END.



